

# LOCAL STUDIES

J. R. ARMSTRONG & P. G. H. HOPKINS

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THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION AND THE  
WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE

# LOCAL STUDIES

*a pamphlet addressed by its authors*

J. R. ARMSTRONG &  
P. G. H. HOPKINS

*to all those interested in local studies  
whether tutors or students in adult classes,  
or school-teachers or ordinary citizens who wish  
to know more of  
the world immediately around them*

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## CONTENTS

Section I Introduction J.R.ARMSTRONG	<i>Page</i>
II 'Place': The Natural Environment P.G.H.HOPKINS	11
III The People J.R.A.	20
IV 'Work': The Economic Life of the Local Area P.G.H.H.	28
V Buildings J.R.A.	36
VI Social Relationships: Living Together P.G.H.H.	44
VII Projects and Practical Work J.R.A.	51
VIII Visual Aids and other Accessories to Local Studies P.G.H.H.	63
IX The Syllabus J.R.A. and P.G.H.H.	67
X Sources and General Bibliography J.R.A. and P.G.H.H.	72

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## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE SCOPE OF LOCAL STUDIES AND OUR OWN APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT

'LOCAL STUDIES' is one of those portmanteau phrases, like 'Current Problems' or 'World Affairs', which can be very differently interpreted. It is a bane to those who seek clear and simple definitions and who like to see the work of adult classes neatly classified. Those who use the phrase are liable to use it approvingly to fit their own particular interests, or prejudicially if they have a notion that it refers to some such activity as that of the Vicar's lady 'doing' the history of the local rectory. The historian will think of it pre-eminently as the study of local history: the geographer as the effect of climate, geology and land-formation on local settlement, transport and economic development; the naturalist as the interaction of climate and geology on vegetation, wild life and land-use. To others it may imply the local contemporary survey—a study of the local community as it is—the provision of education, or conditions in local schools, an analysis of local government and taxation, or the examination of local development plans, or even the water supply and the incidence of tuberculosis.

Local studies can in fact imply all these things, and much besides, and we can see no valid reason why any subject, or any aspect of a subject, which can be illustrated and studied through the locality or the local community should be excluded. We are therefore faced at the outset with a dilemma. How can so much be covered even superficially in the compass of what is intended to be a short outline, and, what is perhaps more to the point—with our own limitations of training and knowledge? We have tried to face these two difficulties as honestly as we can, first by saying little about aspects of local studies such as natural history in which we are ignorant; and, second, by considering a few topics in some detail, instead of attempting to give a carefully balanced but over-cursory survey with little space left to make any personal contribution.

Our own approaches to the subject differ considerably. One of us is by training a geographer, the other an historian. This is probably clear from the text, since we felt it better to leave the bias of our own approach and the differences in our outlook obvious and unmasked rather than to serve up an

agreed statement which would satisfy neither of us. To put our differences very briefly and bluntly, one of us believes that our first concern should be the examination of the local scene as it is. Such an approach starts from a geographical description and the influence of geography on local development. Nothing that now exists is necessarily excluded from such an approach, but the present, not the past, is the starting point; the past tends to be regarded as unimportant, except in so far as it has some clear relationship and relevance to the present, or to the planning of the future. In other words, history is regarded as only one of the several components in local studies, and history for history's sake has no place. The other believes that any real understanding of the community in which we live can only be gained through knowledge of its past and of the steps which have led, however indirectly, to its present condition; that the knowledge, for instance, of how our village, town, or district, spent its leisure or administered justice, in the thirteenth century or the eighteenth century will shed a good deal of light on how it spends its leisure or deals with human weakness or eccentricity in the twentieth century: and that, as a corollary, the future can only be intelligently planned or controlled through such an understanding.

This is stating our differences rather crudely, since our points of view are, in fact, complementary. In practice it means that whereas one of us favours the historical approach by dealing first with origins and building up to the contemporary, the other would start with the present, only working back to the past wherever this seems necessary to explain the present. It is not a question of a correct or incorrect approach, but rather how a synthesis of very different subjects can best be made. Groups may for various reasons favour either the historical or the contemporary approach. The important point is that the value of what is excluded should be realised and the deficiency made good at a later date.

There is, however, no disagreement between us as to the general principle that the context taken should be a wide one; that in an adult class where a certain amount of general knowledge can be assumed, it is quite inappropriate that local studies should centre round the parish pump. To start with a region (whether of the country, or some natural geographical area) and then to illustrate, wherever practicable, from the immediate locality is preferable to considering the wider environment only when it has some direct bearing on the immediate locality. This does not mean that work of research and field study should not be concentrated on the actual surroundings: they should, but the syllabus and programme for the class itself should be framed in more general terms and designed to relate the particular town or district to its wider environment. This is an important principle in the approach to local studies, and may upset those students who think of local history in terms of a lengthy brochure on the parish.

What is meant by local studies, as we here use the phrase, can perhaps best be understood by briefly considering past developments. Today our interest is self-conscious, critical and scientific, concerned with ends and means. We think of society as a flux, and are very much aware of the rapidity of change; we contemplate the present and past with an eye on the future. This has not always been so. In the Middle Ages—and for that matter right up to the nineteenth century—the sense of tradition and continuity was the outstanding bond in the local community. The parish church and the churchyard were the visible symbols of continuity and relationship. The past continued to live in local folk memory, field and house names, and legend. This attitude was not consciously formulated, but was part of the very atmosphere of living. Part at least of the appeal of novelists such as Thomas Hardy to the growing urban and rootless populations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is their expression of this intense feeling for tradition and place—a nostalgic appeal for something lost, but felt to be of value.

In the sixteenth century a more conscious and sophisticated attitude began to develop. The works of the first great local antiquarians, such as Stowe, the historian of London, or works which are a combination of descriptive local topography and history such as Leland's *Itinerary* or Camden's *Britannia*, reflect a growing demand for more exact and comprehensive knowledge. Such works of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century still charm us by their mixture of careful scholarship and naïveté, and their delight in the past for its own sake. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries follow a long succession of local antiquarians, historians and topographers of varying degrees of scholarship and interest, whose works range from the collection of local hagiology and folk-lore to systematic treatises covering every aspect of local history. This culminated in the nineteenth century in the formation of local historical and archaeological societies. A great deal, if not the bulk, of the work of local recording and historical research during the last hundred years has been done by such societies.

The eighteenth century also marked the development of the accurate observation of nature and the relation of animal, plant and insect life to local soil and landscape. The publication of Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* in 1789 met with an immediate and widespread response. The local naturalist had come into his own. The science of ecology—the systematic study of nature in its local setting—had begun. We are now far more alive to these facts and at last are beginning to create not only national parks but nature reservations. In 1943 'The Council for the Promotion of Field Studies' was formed, and since then three residential centres, one in the West, one in the South, and one in the East of England (at Flatford Mill in the heart of the

Constable Country) have been established to help teachers and others in methods and approach.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century local research and interest became broader and deeper. Field archaeology began to throw a much sharper light on the origins and early history of almost every region. The work of the amateur, often ill-equipped, archaeologist of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave way to the more carefully co-ordinated research of those, who, though still for the most part amateurs, have a greater respect for scientific accuracy, and careful recording, and are conscious of the danger of facile or romantic theorising. A glance through the volumes of almost any county archaeological society demonstrates the growing importance of purely archaeological work. Early volumes will be found concerned primarily with written records, while later volumes give increasing space to field research.

By this time geology had become a well founded science, and the systematic study of climate and geography, communications and resources began to fit the local community into a more exact regional pattern of settlement and economic development. We are much more aware of the extent to which landscape, wild life, agriculture, buildings and even the character and outlook of the local community is influenced by the underlying rocks or clays, the contours, drainage, rainfall or prevailing winds.

At the turn of the century sociologists and social anthropologists such as Sir Patrick Geddes in this country and Le Play in France drew attention to the need for synthesis: to the necessity for studying man in his environment as a whole—as part, that is, of an organic process which can only be understood when every part is related to one another and to this whole. This was to some extent a reaction from the increasing tendency towards academic specialisation and the consequent splitting up of our knowledge into separate disciplines. It was to express such a synthesis that the phrase 'Local Studies', in the sense in which it is now generally used, was first coined.

Finally, in the last decade, the greater acceptance of planning, consciously controlled by the community, in place of the *laissez faire* philosophy of the nineteenth century, has given an entirely new twist and emphasis to local studies. The future shape of the community and the region in which we live will be, in part at least, determined by the shape we plan for it now, and by our own conception as to what that shape should be. In so far as we co-operate in the formulation of local development plans and policies, whether in housing, industry, education, justice or the provision of cultural amenities, we are helping to determine that future. The aim—or at least, an important by-product of the local studies class—should be to provide a background of understanding which will enable us to take a more intelligent part in this process of conservation and change.

## GROWTH OF INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT IN RECENT YEARS

It has been encouraging in recent years—particularly since the war—to note the very widespread increase in interest in local studies. In many rural areas, for instance, Women's Institutes have given a lead by the organisation (often on a county basis) of such things as scrapbook competitions or exhibitions; while in the smaller towns, Townswomen's Guilds have stimulated their members to form Local Studies groups. This growth of interest is not confined to voluntary bodies. Just before the war one or two local authorities established record offices. The war and the serious threat to existing records provided an added incentive and in most counties such record offices have by now been set up. Some of these, such as the Essex Records Office, have published, attractively but inexpensively, selections from their archives which they are rapidly accumulating. These publications range from early maps, drawings and cartoons, to extracts from documents illustrating some particular aspect of local history. The two volumes *English History from Essex Sources (1550–1900)* demonstrate how history can be given vivid life from local material.

The National Council of Social Services has also provided a stimulus on a national scale, and has encouraged in many counties the formation of Local History committees, whose function is not only to help in co-ordinating the work of many societies and individuals but to develop in various ways an interest in local history. A number of helpful brochures have been published through the Council; while recently launched publications such as *Amateur Historian* (1952) and the spate of guides and illustrated geographical studies reflect the growth of interest, and themselves provide further stimulus.

## LOCAL STUDIES IN THE SCHOOLS

There is also another factor, deriving from the schools—in particular since the war from the new Modern Secondary Schools, which are now seeking new techniques and fresh stimuli to deal with the problem of interesting and widening the cultural background of 80 per cent. of the future adult population of this country. To the teacher willing to try new methods and to experiment, local studies appear to provide a solution to a very difficult problem, giving a concrete foundation to the study of history, geography, social organisation, architecture, craftsmanship and design, and a dozen other subjects. In fact, on a local foundation, can be built an interest to cover almost every aspect of our cultural inheritance—an interest which can be developed from the particular to the general, from the concrete and known to the abstract, theoretical and unknown. For most of us this is the best means—for many of us the only means—by which our awareness can be widened and deepened.

## LOCAL STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

What has been happening in the schools, and in the country generally, has been reflected in adult education. Since the war, local studies and local history have formed a steadily increasing percentage of the classes organised by the WEA, particularly in the rural areas. Up to 1948 local history had not even the dignity of a separate classification in the annual statistics, being included under general history. In 1948 it forms 2.14 per cent.; in 1949 4.97 per cent.; in 1950 5.2 per cent.; and in the last year for which statistics are available (1953-4) just over 7 per cent. What is, perhaps, more significant, there has been an increase in the percentage of longer courses, of tutorial or sessional status. No doubt this is partly due to a widely growing belief that no sense of community or of common fellowship can really exist unless there is an implicit awareness of continuity—of the ideals, strivings, creative expression through buildings, and works of art and use, of the generations that have preceded our own. Nor is it surprising that it is in the villages and country towns and the smaller urban centres that the interest in local studies has up to now been most evident. In the greater cities and urban conglomerations, all real sense of community was lost before the twentieth century began, and it may now be too late to recover what has been lost. But in the smaller towns and rural communities, although threatened, a new sense of the need for reintegration is now being felt. It is here particularly that we encounter the growing demand for local study classes, and we believe that such classes can contribute a great deal towards that reintegration.

J. R. A.

## SECTION II

### 'PLACE': THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Old Man: 'Didst ever larn geography?'

Young Man: 'No. Nor no other corrupt practices.'

Egdon Heath Scene from *The Dynasts*

FOR some reason—possibly because there were few geographers amongst early WEA tutors—the terms 'Local Studies' and 'Local History' are often taken as synonymous by adult tutors, students and administrators. Before we consider particulars this position should perhaps be clarified, and a few blows struck, not only for geography but also for the 'other corrupt practices'.

When people decide to study their home area, too often the assumption is immediately made that they really wish to know how the present has grown out of the past. That may be their main interest—but it might instead be how the present could develop into a better future; or how the present local scene fits into the national or regional pattern; or indeed their main interest may be simply the local scene as it exists today. No true educator could be content with mere description of the local scene as his ultimate goal, or be content to leave his students believing that they could ignore history with impunity; but he would be foolish to rebuff this initial interest in what, for a variety of reasons, may well be the best starting point for a local studies course.

In the first place, to start with the present scene is to start with concrete, visible facts from which we can later move to more abstract ideas. In school-teaching it is sound educational practice to start with the known and the real, and to work to the unknown and the abstract: to work from the particular to the general, from the part to the whole and from the present to the past. What is sound practice for the Modern School can apply equally well to an adult group of mixed educational background and experience. Indeed, it may apply even better, because a keynote of the voluntary adult class is that its members shall be conscious of the value of their own contributions to class activity. In a description of the contemporary local scene the student often finds himself teaching the tutor, for his non-academic approach may give him an advantage in such matters. The criticisms levelled at the typical young French teacher by two French inspectors<sup>1</sup> are sometimes true of the

<sup>1</sup> Cressot and Troux: *La Géographie et l'Histoire Locales*, p. 4. (Editions Bourrelier et Cie.)

adult tutor—‘All that he knows . . . is more or less superficial, general, verbal. Accustomed to the wide horizons of literature, of history, of the universe; gorged with written generalised ideas, he has studied nothing deeply, in actual contact with reality. Always capable of *talking* geology, botany, meteorology, agriculture, economics, sociology—he is nearly always speechless in the face of rocks, plants, the crops of the place he lives in, the weather it experiences, the way its people live and work. He knows less—and what he knows he knows less usefully—than the farmer, the quarryman, the woodman, his neighbours who are reckoned ignorant but who have taught themselves at the double school of experience and tradition.’ An early demonstration by the tutor that he appreciates the possible truth of some of the above comments can do much to foster interest and self-confidence among the ‘educationally underprivileged’ in his group. Indeed, it may well help in the recruitment and holding together of a better cross-section of the community than is normally attracted by WEA courses.

On general educational grounds also, it is sound that a group should start with description before going on to analysis, synthesis and generalisation, for they are then experiencing (in some degree) the discipline of scientific thought: and realisation of the many difficulties and pitfalls should make them more constructively critical of other people’s generalisations.

Finally the obvious ‘social relevance’ of the recent county development plans appeals to many students of the type we should like to attract to our classes. The background of history, architecture, government, geography and natural science is often appreciated the more for having some clear and immediate social significance.

In short, there is much to be said for beginning with some descriptive, contemporary work in the early stages of the course. The exact form this introductory work should take will vary from group to group, as will the content of the syllabus as a whole. No claim is made that any suggestions in the rest of this section or in the booklet as a whole will be capable of universal application. But it is claimed that there can often be great advantages in concentrating at first upon visible concrete facts and processes.

#### WHAT AREA SHOULD BE STUDIED?

The first concrete problem to occupy the group could well be the selection of the locality for study and the definition of its frontiers.

The choice is not simple, for one might decide upon an administrative unit, such as a parish, a rural district or a county; or upon a ‘geographical unit’, such as the Isle of Purbeck, the Fens, the Potteries, the Tweed Basin or the Vale of Pewsey; or even upon an ‘artificial unit’ such as the area covered by a particular map, whether Ordnance Survey  $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 1",  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " or 6" scale, or a

geology or land utilisation survey map. Opinions may well vary greatly, for the academic advantages of a geographical unit may be outweighed by the difficulties of obtaining base maps and official figures, whilst the statistical and mapping advantages of an administrative unit may be offset by the hotch-potch of terrain included. Such a choice can only be made by the tutor in conjunction with his class in the light of all the special local conditions.<sup>1</sup>

As a general rule, the advice may be repeated that the locale should not be too small. Certainly the larger the area, the greater the chances of illustrating general principles from particular examples; but on the other hand there are a few fortunate small areas in Britain of such great geographic diversity that one is tempted to reverse Wesley's dictum and say 'My parish is the world'.

### 'THE LAND'

Once the locale has been chosen, all is ready for the study of the local physical environment or the local 'Land' in the widest sense of the term. Any comprehensive outline-plan for such a study would contain sub-headings along the following lines: general location; general scenery and relief; land-formation and structure and underlying rocks; climate and weather; drainage and water supply; natural vegetation and soils; animal, bird and insect life; mineral resources.

The amount of time and labour spent on each sub-section would obviously vary greatly with the different localities, different tutors and different students. Detailed systematic treatment here would therefore be out of place. All that is attempted below is a few comments on various points where adult local studies may present special difficulties or special possibilities. Readers wanting further details of the type of subject-matter which might be included in any sub-section are advised to consult *English County: A Planning Survey of Herefordshire*<sup>2</sup> or, if they are concerned with an industrial district, *Conurbation: Birmingham and the Black Country*.<sup>3</sup>

### GENERAL LOCATION

Once the locale has been selected, its relationship to the outside world might well form the next topic for consideration. The destination of its main through-routes, its contacts with markets, ports, shopping and cultural centres outside the district should be noted, and preferably mapped. For this

<sup>1</sup> This problem is discussed in some detail in Chapter III of Fagg and Hutchings' *Introduction to Regional Surveying* (1930), Cambridge University Press, and in Layton and Blanco White's *The School Looks Around* (1948), p. 14 on.

<sup>2</sup> English County: *A Planning Survey of Herefordshire*, prepared by the West Midland Group on Post-war Reconstruction and Planning. Published in 1946, Chapters I-VI.

<sup>3</sup> *Conurbation: Birmingham and the Black Country*, prepared by the West Midland Group. Published in 1948. Chapter III.

purpose the 'Orientation-Chart' or 'Distance-Circle-Diagram' is quite a useful method of expressing the general position. A rough circular map is constructed with the heart of the locale as its centre, and a series of concentric circles with diminishing radial scale of distance are imposed. A useful example of this type of chart can be seen on p. 25 of *The Village Surveyed* by Cecil Stewart (1948).

### RELIEF, STRUCTURE AND SCENERY; GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

It is surprising how incoherent and often how mistaken are the average adult's impressions of the relief of his home district, especially if it is an urban area; and an early duty of the local student should be to clarify in his own mind the general lie of the land, the position of the main ridges and valleys, the degree and type of slope and so on. This clarification is not always possible solely by using maps, for map-reading is an acquired skill, and a good selection of photographs, or better still, some well-chosen visits are therefore of great value at this stage. Neither the tutor nor the student should be afraid of stating the obvious in this part of the work, but once the surface features have been noted the more difficult task of understanding their origins may well be attempted.

The extent to which the landscape-forming processes of upheaval, depression, tilting, folding, faulting and erosion will feature in these sections must again be left to the tutor and his class. Clearly, interest in the Ice Age will be greater north of the Thames; in Alpine earth-movements greater in SE. Britain, whilst erosion and deposition will feature more prominently in the studies of coastal zones. Similarly the extent to which the geology of neighbouring regions is worth consideration will vary greatly from district to district. Certainly every local study of an area in the scarplands of east and southern England should contain some reference to the continuity of the various strata, and thus of the various types of terrain; and the group should always be prepared to consult the local literature of equivalent districts, for close uniformity often exists. The elongated shape of the springline parishes which straddle the Greensand at the foot of the chalk scarps, planned as they were to cross the different geological outcrops in order to include as much variety of rocks, soil and products as possible—this shape is to be found in most of England's downlands, and constitutes a noteworthy example of nature dictating to man in the Dark Ages.

Such an example may often prove helpful in overcoming the 'sales-resistance' to geology which one often meets in adult classes. This prejudice against what can be a really fascinating subject seems to be partly the effect of the technical vocabulary and the special nomenclature which geologists

have needed to develop, but if the tutor (or some class-member) can translate the words of geological technicalities into solid observable local facts a great burst of enthusiasm will often ensue. Parish boundaries in some areas may prove to be the best introduction to such a translation, but in farming districts students may be shocked into an interest in and respect for geology by even a superficial comparison of the local 1" maps of geology and of land utilisation. Here again the overwhelming influence of rocks and soils on our everyday living becomes evident, and farmers are seen to be still the pawns of nature to a great extent, even in these days of government subsidies, artificial fertilisers and tractor-drawn ploughs.

Further signs of the importance of geology in the whole development of the local area can often be obtained by correlating the local settlement pattern and the geology—for example by superimposing a dot-map tracing of population on a geology map. Interesting contrasts of pattern often reveal themselves: between, say, the well-scattered settlement of impermeable areas (like clays or granites) and the valley-line settlement of the permeable strata (such as chalk or limestone). Where the settlement patterns for past periods can be deduced, the control exerted by geology can usually be seen even more clearly, a point appreciated by J. R. Green as long ago as 1882, when he wrote 'Physical geography has still its part to play in the written record of that human history to which it gives so much of its shape and form'.<sup>1</sup>

Other general effects of geology are often obvious in the local building-materials—discussed later in this section and in Section V; and since these signs are often visible in towns where the other physical factors may be less clear, few areas are likely to be without proof of the need to undertake some study of this initially possibly unpopular subject.

Other more detailed physical considerations such as the degree of slope and the favourableness of aspect can be ignored except when they have some special significance, as in fruit-farming regions; but in highland districts the effects of valley-steepness and aspect upon the upper limits of cultivation and of tree-growth certainly warrant attention.

#### CLIMATE AND WEATHER; DRAINAGE AND CATCHMENT AREAS; WATER SUPPLY

Here too the intensity of study required will vary in accordance with local conditions and wishes. Frequently the working of cause and effect is not too obvious, but a few examples will suffice to show that these factors can play a vital part in man's adaptation of his environment.

<sup>1</sup> Useful examples of past control can be studied in Professor Wooldridge's Chapter III in *Historical Geography of England Before 1800*, ed. H. C. Darby; and of recent control in C. A. Simpson's *Rediscovering England*.

If a large area such as a county has been chosen for study, or even a small district provided it is hilly, enough variation of rainfall may well occur in different parts for farmers to be affected in their choice of crops. Wheat is particularly sensitive to rainfall, and districts where the total precipitation ranges from 30" to 40" will probably repay an attempt to correlate wheat-distribution with rainfall. In fruit-growing districts 'temperature-inversion' and the consequent occurrence of frost in the valleys can be decisive in orchard-siting, whilst duration of sunshine and incidence of rainfall can seriously affect a holiday resort.

Wind frequency and direction certainly played a part in the choice of sites for residential suburbs in some industrial cities. The combined and more complex effects of rainfall, rocks and relief upon surface run-off, stream-gradients, water-power and industrial siting in the pre-steam area, upon artesian conditions in underground reservoirs and thus on the water-supply of London or on the growing of watercress on the lower chalk slopes—all offer possibilities of fruitful study in different areas. Details of watersheds and drainage are not mere objects of academic interest for geographers, for, as the Suffolk Planning Survey (1946) takes care to point out . . . 'Catchment areas have a distinct bearing on the location of centres of population, and, as the most economic method of sewerage a town is by gravitation, it follows that the location of urban and rural development will be determined to some degree by their boundaries.'

#### NATURAL VEGETATION AND SOILS

This section too is one with infinite possibilities of variation, but even non-botanists need to note the interaction between natural vegetation and soils, and also the fact that surface soils are usually of greater importance to an area than the underlying rocks. This is especially true of areas with a heavy cover of glacial soils or 'drift'; but quite apart from that factor the normal classification of rocks on a 1" geology map can be most misleading. (Students, for example, in North Yorkshire, need to beware of the Corallian series of the Hambleton Hills.) Thus where soil maps are available they should be studied: where they are not available they should be made, however imperfectly.

The whole field of ecology and natural history can also provide some fascinating topics for groups in which the tutor or individual students have the necessary background knowledge. And even classes with no specialist knowledge could examine profitably the effects of large-scale fires on local forests or heathland, or the effects of the decline of sheep-pasturing on our 'close-cropped downland turf'—now usually overrun with thorn and scrub. Military firing-ranges, disused aerodromes and old bomb-sites also provide

good places for studying changing relationships in wild life and vegetation, and there are few parts of Britain which do not give evidence of striking contrast in botany, natural history and ecology within a few miles radius.

### MINERAL RESOURCES

Again no general rules can be laid down, but local students will always be well advised to consult the chapter on 'Economic Geology' normally found at the end of the local *Geological Memoir*. These chapters are usually quite intelligible to the layman, but sometimes are out of date and give insufficient attention to the more humble minerals, such as clays for pottery and bricks, or sands and gravels for building purposes. Use of recent Government surveys (see bibliography) together with personal local research by the group can supplement these sources with news of later changes.

Here again a group can often illustrate the impact of geology upon the life of the area by an examination of the extent to which the local building materials are really local in origin. Certainly improved transport, mass-produced materials and the decline of local craftsmanship are all blurring the clear local differentiations which once existed, but even so it is still possible to map 'zones of building materials' with a fair degree of accuracy.

Such maps are especially applicable to really rural areas, since in many villages there was virtually no building in the 150 years up to 1939. Thus, if one excludes the post-war council houses, all their buildings date from the days when local materials had to be used, at least for the humbler houses.

This means that it is usually still possible to determine in which 'building-material-zone' one is situated—whether the granite and slate zone; the limestone; the sandstone; the brick and tiles; the chalk, flints, cob and thatch zone; the timber-frame, weather-boarding or wattle-and-daub zones. Groups are often intrigued by the similarity between the materials and style of their local houses and those of another part of the same zone, possibly three hundred miles away, particularly when great contrasts may be visible only a few miles off. A Cotswold class, for instance, might well spend an evening comparing their typical cottages with those of, say, Purbeck, Portland, Bath, Ketton, Barnack, Clipsham and Ancaster. They would find clear and striking resemblances, but further investigations would also reveal the diversity which exists within the general uniformity, the differences often stemming from the varying roofing-materials at hand or the colour, graining and weathering qualities of the stone. Even chalk areas, which present such a striking scenic uniformity throughout the country that William Smith recognised the Yorkshire Wolds as chalk when he first saw them twenty miles away, nevertheless provide at least ten variations of building-materials, despite the general predominance of cob and flints. Thus, in addition to the more normal subject

of fitting the local houses into their context in time—(discussed in Section V)—it is well worth while to consider their context in space.<sup>1</sup>

The section on mineral resources might with equal logic be reserved for discussion later in the syllabus when the economic aspects of the community are under review—a fact which underlines the linking and overlapping of the component parts of a local studies course<sup>2</sup>; but there is something to be said for dealing with the location (and possibly the working) of the minerals whilst the strata and structure are still fresh in the mind, since forecasts of future expansion or contraction will depend greatly upon these geological conditions.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

Already it will be seen that local studies could become a life's work and it is not surprising that Fagg and Hutchings write in their *Regional Surveying* of 'the danger of being overwhelmed by the apparent magnitude of the undertaking'. Some heart may be taken from the chances of co-operative work in an adult class—and more heart from the fact that in the very nature of things no local study can ever be completed, for tomorrow always brings new developments. Imperfection and incompleteness are two inescapable attributes of the local studies course. Nevertheless, this need not be regarded as a tragedy; for if selection of topics is inevitable, then the abilities of the tutor and student can sway the choice, the gaps in the tutor's knowledge can offer very useful opportunities for genuine contributions from his group, and the very process of selection in itself can be a useful educational exercise if undertaken consciously and carefully by the class. It may still be decided to pay scant attention to some of 'the corrupt practices', but at least their existence and significance will have been noted.

P. G. H. H.

#### SOME SUGGESTED BOOKS

##### GEOLOGY, SCENERY, ETC.:

The Local Geological Sheet Memoir. (See H.M.S.O. Catalogue of Geology Memoirs, Maps, Sections, etc.)

Any relevant articles in *Geography* or *Geographical Journal*.

<sup>1</sup> The following references may be found helpful on this particular subject: H. J. Massingham: *Field Fellowship* (pp. 24–53). Jacquetta Hawkes: *A Land*. Cresset Press, 1951, chapter VII. V. Bonham-Carter: *The English Village* (Pelican), pp. 98–121. T. D. Atkinson: *Local Style in English Architecture* (stresses churches rather than houses). Batsford, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> For a diagrammatic representation of that complex inter-relationship, see *The Conspectus Diagram* in Fagg and Hutchings: *Introduction to Regional Surveying* (p. 10).

A. E. Truman, *Geology and Scenery in England and Wales*. Pelican. (An excellent introduction.)  
Jacquetta Hawkes, *A Land*. (Cresset Press.) (A most stimulating background book.)  
L. D. Stamp, *Britain's Structure and Scenery*. (Collins.) (Rather more difficult.)  
Stanford's *Geological Atlas of Great Britain*. Woodward. (With its useful photographic supplement showing the Victorian physical scene.)  
I. O. Evans, *The Observer's Book of British Geology*. (Warne.)  
J. A. Steers, *The Coastline of England and Wales*. (Cambridge University Press.)  
A. Holmes, *Principles of Physical Geology*. (Nelson.)  
H. J. Massingham, *English Downland*. (Batsford.) (For chalk areas.)  
C. A. Simpson, *Rediscovering England*. (Benn.)  
T. Miller, *Geology and Scenery in Britain*. (Batsford.)  
Surveys of Royal Forests, Parks and Chases, 1608 and 1783 in *House of Commons Journals*, XLVII, 1792.

#### WEATHER, ETC.:

G. Manley, *Climate of the British Scene*. (Collins.)  
Pick, *Elementary Meteorology*. (H.M.S.O.)  
Kimble and Bush, *Weather*. (Pelican.)  
Benstead, *The Weather Eye*. (Hale.)

#### NATURAL HISTORY, ECOLOGY, ETC.:

(Neither of us is qualified to advise on this topic: but from other sources we have obtained these references.)

A. G. Tansley, *The British Islands and Their Vegetation*. (Cambridge University Press, revised edition 1939.)  
A. G. Tansley, *Practical Plant Ecology*. (Allen and Unwin.)  
(Includes useful regional bibliography.)  
Any relevant volumes of the excellent *New Naturalist Series* (Collins), e.g.  
Lousley, *Wild Flowers of the Chalk and Limestone* (Collins); Pearsall,  
*Mountains and Moorlands* (Collins); F. Fraser Darling, *Natural History in the Islands and Highlands* (Collins).  
Any of the relevant *Observer's Books*. (Warne.)  
*Woodlands*, 1947-49. (H.M.S.O. 1952.)  
Bulletin 146 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Wild Birds and the Land*. (H.M.S.O. 1948.)  
Bulletin 150 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Wild Mammals and the Land*. (H.M.S.O. 1951.)

## SECTION III

### THE PEOPLE

PERHAPS the simplest way to approach our subject is to ask ourselves a number of questions—the kind of questions which are likely to be asked in any WEA class, and to see how these questions may be answered. Such questions as 'What kind of people form the community in which we live; where have they come from; how, when and why have their number changed? How have their occupations changed, their expectation of life and the size of their families?'

We have only to face the questions, 'What are the origins of the local population, what were its antecedents, where did they come from?' to realise the futility of any attempt to explain the local in local terms, since the part can only be understood by reference to the whole. On the other hand, to dismiss any further enquiry by simply stating that we are a mixed people is to refuse even to attempt an answer. The answer can, however, only be a tracing of the racial origins of these islands as a whole, followed by the narrowing down of the survey to an examination of the probable local movements and an approximate estimate of the situation as it had become more stabilised at about the time, let us say, of the Norman Conquest.

#### MIXED CHARACTER OF THE POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

One of our most eminent ethnologists used to illustrate his seminar lectures by a rough classification of those attending his class into the various racial types that go to make up the mixed population of this island. A similar technique could equally be used in any typical class of adult students, for although we are mixed people the final result of the mixture resembles rather a jar of coloured sands which has been partly shaken, than a bottle of coloured liquids which have been completely fused into a homogeneous grey. Not merely are certain physical features characteristic of particular racial and ethnic groups dominant in some areas, and virtually non-existent in others, but even in a small area, variations can be traced. In some midland and northern regions, very different average types can exist in neighbouring industrial and agricultural villages. In such instances, migration during the last 150 years may be found to have been the chief cause. But apart from these group differences, every village and virtually every WEA class will

reflect the basic elements which have gone to the making of what we rather loosely term 'the typical Englishman'—paleolithic, long-headed neolithic, broad-headed beaker folk, Goidelic and Brythonic Celts, Saxon, Angle and Dane, Norman and Norman-French. But whether we start from the village and work outwards, or whether we start answering the question of origins by describing the region, or Western Europe as a whole, some consideration of the latter cannot be omitted, otherwise any local analysis itself becomes meaningless.

#### RELATIVE STABILITY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

The relative stability of local communities varies greatly. In some areas—for instance in some of the villages of Central Wales—there has probably been very little significant movement for perhaps a thousand years; whereas many midland towns and villages may, within the last two hundred years, have witnessed movements so rapid that the basic character of the population has been changed completely within a couple of generations. Practically every region, and every local community within a region, will be found to have its own particular pattern—a pattern which can be traced in some detail—during the last five hundred years. Up to the Domesday Survey, the background can in most areas be given only in general terms (and even then distribution, size and character of the local population is largely conjectural, being based on evidence derived from place names, archaeological evidence of early settlement, etc.).

#### THE DOMESDAY SURVEY

With the Domesday Survey we can begin a far more exact examination. It has been described as the most remarkable statistical document in the history of Europe. It is a mine of facts from which can be abstracted data covering many aspects of population, social structure and economic life. 'Nay, moreover,' says the contemporary chronicler '(it is shameful to tell, though he thought it no shame to do it), not even an ox nor a cow, nor a swine was there left, that was not set down in his book.' But in very few areas have detailed analyses of Domesday been made. H. C. Darby in *The Domesday Geography of Eastern England*<sup>1</sup> indicates the kind of thing that can be done on a county and regional basis. It contains 109 maps, which isolate various facts supplied by Domesday, and will suggest to groups what they could work out for themselves in their own immediate locality, remembering that within a smaller area a far more detailed study can be made by

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1952 by the Cambridge University Press, 55s., and planned as the first volume of a series covering the whole of England.

plotting, for example, in a series of comparative maps, the size, class structure and distribution of the local population and correlating this with the situation at the time of the first census (1801) or with the population today. This can be most effectively done by super-imposed transparencies.<sup>1</sup> The area and population of the manors and vills of Domesday can similarly be related to the parishes, rural districts and towns of the area today. Such local analyses of the Domesday record provide an excellent opportunity for co-operative class work, since the material is readily accessible. Not only do the Victoria County Histories provide a complete transcript for the county, but many of the county Archaeological Societies have produced facsimiles with extensive commentaries.

#### THE POPULATION DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

The five hundred years following the Domesday record do not provide us with anything so complete and exact, but in most areas, changes both in number and character can be inferred with some accuracy from an analysis of medieval tax returns, trade returns, ecclesiastical visitations, manorial records, etc. In fact, a good deal of speculation as to the rise of population in the middle Norman period, or again in the thirteenth century, or of the local incidence of the Black Death of 1347-49 and of recurring outbreaks of plague from that date to the seventeenth century, would be very much clarified by a checking in various parts of the country of figures collected and examined on a local basis.

#### THE PARISH CHURCH AS EVIDENCE

The growth of the parish church from Norman times—in some cases earlier—provides evidence of a rather different kind. William Cobbett in the early nineteenth century went widely astray in his belief in a decline in rural population by basing his case on the assumption that the medieval community not only filled its churches but stood in serried ranks to do so; but the records of rebuilding of the parish church, its extensions, or its stagnation at different periods from 1066 to the beginning of the Tudor period do afford us clues as to increase or decline, prosperity or indigence of the local population. Commencing in the middle of the sixteenth century, the parish registers provide us with much more exact and continuous information. Where they are complete, we can assess fairly precisely the extent of and very often the reasons for growth or decline of the local population, changes in the size of the family, changes in the survival rate, the infant mortality rate, the incidence of

<sup>1</sup> Ethulon, a product of Messrs. May and Baker is a cheap plastic transparency which overcomes the difficulties experienced with other types of tracing paper or cloth. (Ethulon 'film' is preferable for superposition.)

local epidemics, or other disasters. From the parish registers, also, some fair idea can be gained of the stability of the population and the amount of migration.

#### EVIDENCE FROM LOCAL DIALECT WORDS AND FAMILY NAMES

In most localities there has been, at various periods in the last five centuries and before the first census, specific migration connected with local economic changes, or refugee movements from the Continent. These can usually be illustrated through the tabulation of family names in the parish registers, supplemented by inscriptions on tombs, etc. The introduction of new family names provides in many areas a valuable clue to the migration of minorities. This is obvious where the newcomers are from the Continent—Huguenot names in East Anglia and the south-eastern counties, for instance, German names in the Cumberland mining areas, or Italian and French in the Surrey and Sussex glass area, Dutch in the Fenland area, and so on. Reference to contemporary documents is, however, essential, since alien names often become rapidly modified or anglicised. A casual glance through a Liverpool or Glasgow directory today will reveal the extent of Irish immigration during the last century, but this may not be valid for their descendants a hundred years hence. There is also another point to be remembered, that the further we go back to the past the nearer we are to the origin of many, if not most, family names—place. Part of the tragic irony explicit in Hardy's novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* lies in the fact that the slattern family of Durbeyfield derives from the aristocratic family which centuries earlier had come as conquering aliens taking their name from their original Norman village home.

#### THE DECAENNIAL CENSUS

Finally we come to the very full and exact information which can be culled from the Decennial Census since the first census of 1801. From these census figures the rise and fall in different classified employments, and therefore the changes in the relative importance of local industries can be assessed, as well as a good deal concerning the changing structure of local society, including changes in the average size of the family, or housing accommodation.

In 1941, because of the war, the decennial census was not carried out—the only time since 1801—but a fairly complete picture of the local movement in population-movements largely of a temporary character can be built up from the returns of the Registrar-General, the Ministry of Labour and the local food offices. (Frequently the local County Development Plan's Written Statement will contain a summary of such recent statistics.)

#### CHANGES IN THE EXPECTATION OF LIFE, SIZE OF FAMILY, ETC.

With the complete publication of the census returns for 1951, which will contain information not included in previous census returns, it may be found

possible to answer more accurately questions relating to changes in the birth rate, size of family, etc. Significant local differences may be revealed. A comparison of neighbouring communities within a given area often discloses surprising differences in the average expectation of life, longevity, infant mortality, or the incidence of epidemics. (Interesting comparisons can be made with the figures in Chadwick's 'Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population'.) In an industrial urban area, the causes of such differences are usually fairly apparent, but similar contrasts may be found among neighbouring rural communities, and be found to be related to purely geographical factors, such as relative altitude, humidity, or the character of the subsoil, etc. In my own area certain villages have a reputation for longevity. This may be without foundation, though a casual survey of the gravestones or memorials in the church or churchyard seem to support it. An analysis of the census returns and the parish registers might confirm this and if so might even suggest a reason; it would certainly stimulate any class to try to discover one.

#### RELATION OF POPULATION GROWTH TO BUILDING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

It should need no stressing that any population survey should be linked all through with corresponding changes in the social and economic environment. Where information exists in the form of early maps or town plans, the correlation between building and population growth repays careful study. There may be found periods, particularly in rural areas in the 1820s and 1830s, when there seems to have been no increase in local housing comparable to the increase in population, a period in fact of agricultural depression, unemployment and rural overcrowding.

Up to now, we have been concerned with factual evidence from the past and the present: local studies should also have some reference to the future. With the acceptance (within limits) of the planning of industrial location and of urban development and housing, it has become necessary not only to estimate population trends—rate of increase, migration, size of family and housing demands, etc.—but also to adapt over-all planning to these trends, or alternatively to influence these observed trends. Although the basic fluctuations of population are determined by birth and death rates which only indirectly can be subject to collective control, the location and distribution of population can be more exactly determined. At the moment, collective control in this country attempts to hold some balance between the exercise of individual freedom of movement, and over-all economic planning. But even the complete control of industrial location, plus a planned agriculture, could leave a very large margin of choice and possible variation in population densities and

distribution. The sick, the aged, the retired, all those of independent means, and those seeking relaxation and holidays away from their working environment, as well as those living in dormitory areas made practicable through the growth of transport facilities and shorter working hours may desire to live as far from the centres of industry or their places of work as possible. Every authority has, therefore, been faced with an exceedingly difficult problem in working out comprehensive development plans under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, or in anticipating the school population of 1960 or 1970 in their development plans for education.

#### ESTIMATES OF FUTURE POPULATION

In most cases estimates have been based on the assessment of trends during the last thirty years, and a projection of these trends into the future. This is a very rough and ready procedure, and already many estimates have had to be drastically revised in the light of experience over the last three or four years. The difference in approach between the development plans under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, and those under the 1944 Education Act, is mainly that the one inclines to set a maximum limit to the development of the local community, the other to assume a minimum expansion. The reality is likely to be found between these two extremes. A thorough examination of the sources of information on which the local authority has based its plans, and the subjection of these plans to informed criticism, is the kind of public service a local studies group should be encouraged to undertake.

The degree of stability within the local community within the last 100 years can be traced from census returns, etc., with some accuracy; but a local studies group may find it an interesting as well as a useful piece of field-work to carry this analysis a stage further by means of a local survey—in a town by a sample, in a village by a complete survey if this is practicable. Such a survey would enquire into the length of residence of each family, the direction of migration (i.e. the place of origin of immigrant families, and the extent to which the population is dependent on livelihood in the immediate area).

#### THE HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES

We have indicated the way in which one or two of the questions posed at the beginning of this section might be answered. There is, however, another aspect likely to be of more particular interest to rural groups and those in smaller communities where population has been relatively stable. To those who have identified themselves with the local community, or who are by birth a part of that community, the history of individual families can be a subject of considerable interest. An examination of the parish register will

provide a good deal of information. A tabulation, for instance, of family names recorded in the sixteenth century and their frequency, if followed at intervals of a couple of generations in each succeeding century, will not only provide a rough check on the degree of stability of the local population, but indicates the rise and fall of individual family groups. Family trees can often be worked out, and even relationships traced from individuals now living to ancestors in the sixteenth century. If this can be combined with an analysis of neighbouring parish registers, not only may interesting links between parish and parish be revealed, but also corroborative evidence of the extent of local epidemics and high death rates or rising local birth rates, etc. Difficulties will often be met with, as in one small parish in Sussex where four individuals with the name Thomas Hartley were found to be living at the same time in the sixteenth century, three of them occasionally—but not always—distinguished by the suffix ‘senior’, ‘junior’, ‘the Smith’. But in spite of difficulties the analysis will usually be found worth while to members of any class who share these local names, or to whom these names are familiar. It may also be possible to relate these names to those mentioned in documents such as manorial maps, enclosure awards, tithe maps, etc., or with family names often given to houses, fields, etc., and the lists of J.P.s, churchwardens or commissioners appointed for many different purposes.

#### HERALDRY

Another linked topic, in which there has been a recent revival of interest, is the art of heraldry. This art, which is so characteristic of the later Middle Ages, and so bound up with the sense of family continuity and that of corporate bodies and institutions, forms an excellent subject for local study, since an essential basis is that of place. The enormous variety and inventiveness of heraldic symbols derives quite often from topographical suggestions and lends itself particularly well to the kind of exposition and analysis described in general terms in Section VII of this outline.

In most villages and towns a great deal of scattered material exists, whether in the decorative details of the church (bosses, wood-carving, on tombs and stained and painted glass), or in individual houses (lintels over doorways, painted panels, window glass), or on public buildings such as town halls, schools, etc. It is, indeed, surprising how much material is to be found in the most unpromising surroundings: when brought together and explained, it can form an impressive and significant whole and will often shed an illuminating sidelight on other aspects of local life.

The foregoing should be regarded as merely offering a few suggestions as to how some of the questions asked at the beginning of this section might

be answered. Nothing has been said of the study, either of individual family histories, or the lives of local worthies. Where material exists and the lives of these individuals reflect the strains and tensions of their age, this is by far the best way to bring to life conflicts and ideals of the past from which our own present has emerged. Even the diary of a local eighteenth-century tradesman, or a seventeenth-century parson (there happen to be a surprisingly large number of such diaries in the area with which I am best acquainted), tell us not merely something about the relative values and the cost of living, or what was served at a middle-class Christmas dinner, but the kind of attitude that such individuals had to many of the major problems and conflicts of their day.

J. R. A.

### SOME SUGGESTED BOOKS

Local settlement, whether pre-Roman, Roman or Saxon, can only be studied through books which deal with local archaeology, such as the excellent 'County Archaeologies' series published by Methuen, or through the publication of the local Historical and Archaeological Societies. These, however, should always be considered against the background of more general works such as:

H. J. Fleure, *Natural History of Man in Britain. New Naturalist Series.* (Collins).  
E. T. Leeds, *Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlement.*  
Darby, *An Historical Geography of England before 1800 A.D.* (Cambridge University Press.)  
E. Eckwall, *Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* (and of course the county volumes of the English Place Names Society).  
J. C. Russell, *British Medieval Population.* (1948 Albuquerque.)  
The Ordnance Survey Maps of 'Roman Britain' and of 'Britain in the Dark Ages', and other period maps.  
J. C. Cox, *The Parish Registers of England.*  
Moncreiffe and Pottinger, *Simple Heraldry.*  
Wagner, *Heraldry in England.* (King Penguin.)  
C. L. E. Ewen, *History of Surnames of the British Isles.* (1931.)  
*Essex Parish Records* (Essex Record Office, 1950) is an excellent guide to Parish Records on a county basis.  
*English History from Essex Sources* (do. Vol. I, 1550-1750, Vol. II, 1750-1900) indicates the way in which history can be made to live by the use of local material (letters, diaries, journals, parish accounts, etc.).

## SECTION IV

### 'WORK': THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE LOCAL AREA

FRÉDÉRIC LE PLAY, the French sociologist, who can truly be regarded as the father of modern local studies, saw society as dependent on the interaction of *place* and *folk* through the medium of *work*, in much the same way that a biologist regards life as the interaction between organism and environment through function.

In Section II, we examined 'place' in the physical sense of that term, and we return to that aspect again in Section V. 'Folk' provides the main theme for Section III, and a mixture of 'folk' and 'place' (in a wider sense) the theme of Sections VI and VII. Only this section concentrates upon 'work'—but the amount of space allotted is not to be taken as an index of the importance of the topic. Certainly with a WEA group attention may well focus especially upon this aspect of the local scene; and an analysis of the 'occupational structure' of the area under study can be an attractive introduction to local studies.

If the area coincides with an administrative unit, it should be easy to obtain figures for the different occupations of all insured workers (based on Ministry of Labour returns) at least for the Employment Exchange districts. Similar (though seldom identical) figures may be obtained from the occupational tables in the national censuses; and once the 1951 census figures are published in full they should be regarded as essential for every local studies class book box. Till now accurate comparison of an area's pre-war and post-war occupational structure has been well nigh impossible because of the different qualifications and classifications used by the Registrar-General and the Minister of Labour; but with the new census it will be possible for the first time to assess fully the changes which have occurred in the industrial make-up of a district during the last twenty years.

It will be noted that stress is being laid upon comparison and upon the appraisal of recent trends; but such comparisons will be of little value unless local and national figures are also compared. Yet grave dangers of confusion and of boredom arise when too much statistical comparison is made. This can normally be overcome by using one of the many diagrammatic methods available, such as that illustrated in Figure 1 (on p. 29).

Such a diagram enables the comparison to be made swiftly and easily. It also brings home, in a way that no maze of figures could, the importance of

the service (or tertiary) industries which appear in the segments lettered H, and the comparative insignificance in modern Britain of the primary producing industries. In our example, the extra stress on the service industries in the seaside resort of Poole is also evident. With such aid, there is less danger of an excessive preoccupation with the 'quaint' industries, which catch the headlines, but are really of little importance.

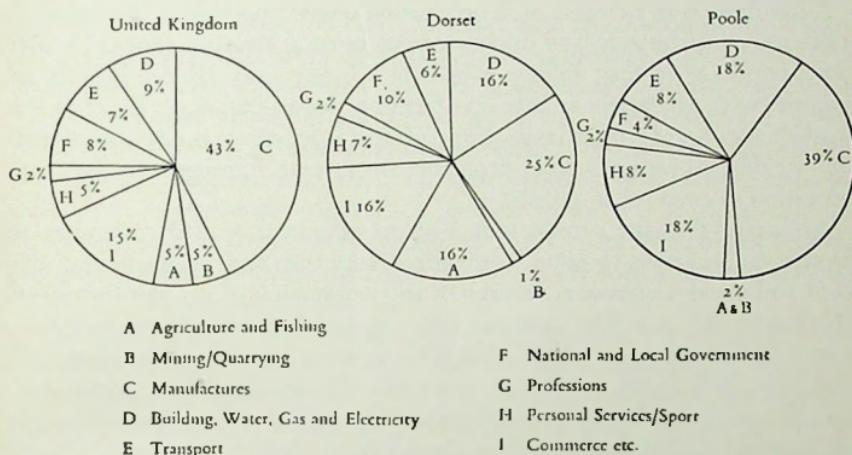


FIGURE 1: Occupations of insured workers 1947

If it is felt by the group that an examination of all occupations would not be worth while, the following might well be selected as often revealing interesting trends:

Agriculture: engineering: food and drink industries: any local special manufactures: building and contracting: the distributive trades: and 'personal services'.

This last group—'personal services'—despite its extremely wide content (from barmen to barbers and from game-keepers to undertakers) provides in its recent changes a striking reflection of the social revolution of our times. In the 1931 Dorset census, for example, 21 per cent. of those employed came in the personal category (as compared with 11 per cent. for England and Wales). This large percentage was only very partially due to the tourist trade, for over three-quarters of that 21 per cent. were domestic servants. Judging from the 1 per cent. sample figures already issued, the 1951 statistics will show

a greatly reduced number in this category, and one much nearer the national average. Such facts might well lead a group into discussion of the decline of the middle-classes, and of the large country estates—but the vital point is that all such discussions should revolve round a verifiable central core of verifiable facts.

#### AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is an example of an occupation whose importance (statistically) is often over-estimated; and many students in rural areas are shocked at the low percentage of their fellows who win a living from the land. Only in counties with exceptionally intensive farming, do we find one-quarter of the workers employed on the land—but statistical importance is not everything, and world and national food problems are forcing farming into the consideration of even urban groups.

Assuming that the groups start with an examination of the numbers at present employed in farming, comparison may then well be made with the 1931 and previous censuses, leading to an examination of the past history of farming in the area. The existence of an agricultural past is too easily forgotten in our great cities, but even there records of previous farming will undoubtedly be found—and even occasional farm-buildings now put to other uses. Domesday will provide the first concrete evidence in most areas, though occasionally Celtic fields, Roman grain-pits or ancient cultivation-terraces may give reasons for earlier starting points. In any case, an assessment could usefully be made of the merits and defects of the area from the point of view of pre-Norman farming: an assessment based on the conjectured case of settlement and of tilling of the local soil types.<sup>1</sup>

The manorial period could be reconstructed as far as possible with the aid of any manorial maps and records, enclosure awards, contemporary descriptions, etc.; and it is worth noting that in some areas the first ordnance survey maps of 1811 will still show the open-fields pattern in operation. With luck, Arthur Young's Tours, or the Board of Agriculture's surveys of the Napoleonic period—(often excellent)—or Marshall or Cobbett should help to bridge the gap until the Victorian official reports on agriculture and the annual publication of reliable agricultural statistics in 1866.

From 1867 on, the study of farming is undoubtedly best linked with the Land Utilisation Survey report for the county. These reports vary in quality, but generally provide an excellent introduction to the Great Depression which comprised farming history from the 1870s to the 1930s—together

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter III of *Historical Geography of England before 1800*, ed. H. C. Darby, Professor Wooldridge gives a most helpful account of Anglo-Saxon settlement in England, upon which such an assessment could be based.

with a full consideration of the factors affecting pre-war land use. Here a useful focus for discussion in classes in south-east England can be found in the startling decline in the sheep population of all the Downland counties. This question usually evokes a certain amount of sentimental interest as a starting-point, but it can develop into a consideration of the whole background of our pre-war farming depression. For to account for the decline of Downland sheep one must consider such factors as the foreign competition not only in wool and mutton, but in grain (after the 1846 Repeal of the Corn Laws); the complete collapse of the old High Farming with its rotation in which roots for folded sheep were an integral part; the comparative immunity of fresh milk from foreign competition; the new possibilities of piping water (with 50 per cent. government grants) to the dry downland pastures, and of bail-milking on the spot. All these developments, and others, such as Milk Marketing Boards, refrigerator-ships and the shortage of shepherds, need attention when one bemoans the absence of 'frisen lambs wi' swingen tails and woolly lags'. Many students too appreciate the irony of the contrast between the modern attitude to the flock and that of Sir Thomas More and Latimer, in the days of Sheep-enclosures.

In addition to such discussions, really useful practical work can be undertaken where the 1" Land Utilisation maps are still obtainable, by instituting a comparison between the use of the neighbouring land in the 1930s and at the present time. If memories are good enough to allow the mapping of the 1943-44 position as well, excellent material is then at hand for illustrating both the extent of the war-time reversal of the pre-war 'down to grass' trend and the partial relapse since war-time pressures were eased. Here surely is a stage where the local problems should be related to the national and even the international scene, and the future of British farming debated in the light of our trade position and the Dollar Gap, the Cold War and the world food shortage. The choice between 'Protection for British Farming' or 'Free Trade in Food' is then seen to be one which vitally concerns not only local farmers and their men, but also Britain's industrial population and the natives of the backward countries of the world. In any local studies course such wider issues should be introduced from time to time, for, in escaping the censure of John Bill, who complained in 1626 that 'most students in Geographie take more delight to contemplate the remotest and most barbarous countries of the earth than lightly to examine the descriptions of their own', there are always dangers of going to the opposite extreme.

The extent to which the group should pursue the more detailed aspects of local farming cannot usefully be discussed in the abstract; but rural groups could consider studying such topics as the 'rationalisation of local farm boundaries'; specialised crops and techniques of production; the extent of

<sup>1</sup> See the *Yetminster Farm Boundary Report*, H.M.S.O. 1951.

mechanisation on local farms; and the effects on the adjacent countryside of the growth of any nearby town. This last is a subject in which some groups on the edge of large and rapidly growing towns could carry out most useful research—but it is also a subject where the research must be painstaking if it is to be worth anything. The old assumptions regarding this question need very careful testing, as has been shown by the Agriculture Land Survey Research Group's Survey-study of Scunthorpe (published in January, 1951), which finds none of the normally expected results, such as more market-gardening, more liquid milk production or the loss of labour from farms to factories. On this and other similar points, the work of the group could be of value to the Town and Country Planners of the area, and they should certainly be approached in the early stages of any such survey.

### INDUSTRIES

Here again variety is the keynote, and the possible approaches are legion. A logical sequence can be followed from farming into industries based now or in the past on local farm-products (e.g. brewing, biscuits, woollens); and thence into the other local extractive industries of forestry, fishing and quarrying, before passing on to the manufactures depending first on these 'extracted' raw materials and finally upon imported raw materials.

Once again description should be regarded as merely the first step of the survey, for history should be invoked to show why the different industries began in this place, why others started and failed, and even why some were non-starters. From the history should emerge a clear pattern of the factors in industrial location; and some assessment could be made of the relative importance of such factors as raw materials, labour, power and markets in the siting of different types of industry. Then could follow a study of 'industrial inertia', of the factors operating to keep an industry in its starting place after the original siting-factors have disappeared; and also of the factors operating for change—such as changing sources of power, improved transport, new techniques, etc.; so that some reasoned discussion might ensue on the future employment prospects of the area.

Such a general examination of the locality's industrial past can be most helpful in assessing future trends, and it may often be useful to study in detail one or two of the local industries which once flourished, but have since died. In Sussex, for example, the rise and fall of the iron, glass and shipbuilding industries have a message for the modern planner; and, whilst few areas will be quite as rich in examples, most places will provide many illustrations of the decline of the scattered crafts with the Industrial Revolution, and of the more recent trend for further concentration of industry into larger units—as with breweries, dairies and mills. The effects of transport changes (canal,

turnpike and railway) upon the supply of raw materials and upon the ease of selling (or of buying) elsewhere, are often striking. Analogous developments today will be better understood and judged in the light of the tremendous changes of the last two centuries. Nor should the more recent past be ignored, for it is often salutary to examine the unemployment figures for 1929-33, and to note the varying impact of the world slump upon different industries, different areas, and if time permits, different countries.

Whilst such topics are of widespread interest, any local studies group will naturally be on the alert for any special local employment problem. In a holiday resort account could be taken of seasonal unemployment: in a rural area, of the dying village crafts or of the possibilities of revival of rural industry with electric power and motor transport. Thus, in each area particular problems will force themselves into the syllabus because they have already forced themselves into the everyday lives of the local worker.

#### SERVICE INDUSTRIES

One advantage of beginning the survey of the economic life of the community with the most recent Ministry of Labour statistics is that due weight must then be given to the less obvious, yet very important service industries—to building, water, gas and electricity, to Government, professional and personal services, to commerce and to transport. As has been said, more and more of Britain's workers are moving into these 'service industries', and this might be a suitable point at which to consider the full implications of this tendency. The fact that, whilst total figures are easily obtained, it is much harder to break those totals down for detailed study, is in itself significant; for it is the smallness of many of the units in this branch of our economy which both causes our difficulties in study and tends frequently to make the units themselves too small to obtain the economies of large-scale production. Despite these difficulties, very useful surveys—e.g. of the shops in a given district—are possible in both rural and urban areas, though as a general rule, the area for such a survey needs to be very small.

#### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Finally, the number of local workers in rail, road and water transport and in other forms of communication can lead to a full consideration of the transport system of the locale. Here again the historical approach is probably the best, with its successive stress on roads, canals, railways and roads again, but care should be taken not to omit river, sea and air travel.

The local 'Development Plan' and its accompanying written statement should certainly be investigated for its definite proposals of future changes which can be debated by the group. Also it is probable that the local Town

and Country Planning Department could suggest various topics where further research would aid future planning—(topics such as density of traffic at certain points, numbers travelling certain routes to work, etc.); and could help to provide material for maps of road traffic volume (with the thickness of road-line varying in accordance with the density of traffic carried), or of 'remoteness' (where areas more than one or two miles from the nearest bus-route or railway station are shaded). The making of such maps can be revealing and rewarding exercises for those who do not relish essay-writing.

### CONCLUSION

Even in these notes, enough has been suggested to keep a group busy for many months, and that in itself is one of the greatest merits of this part of local studies. Here is a section of the syllabus where the practically-minded member of the class can enjoy himself and where his self-respect is assured. Really valuable contributions can often be obtained from the manual workers in the group—such as the roadman in one class who analysed the access of all the large local estates to road-metal and building materials; or the quarryman who had hardly put pen to paper since leaving school at eleven, but who gave in reply to a harmless question about the soil in his garden, a detailed written account of the strata for the next two hundred feet, together with particulars of the past and present working of those beds. On matters of 'Work' the local trade unionists can often correct the schoolmaster, the squire, the vicar and the tutor, and the process is usually good for all concerned.

The tutor's job in this section, surely, is mainly to encourage and guide group activity, and to bring to the fore from time to time the basic theme of the interaction between man and his environment, between past and present and between local and national. Probably that last relationship is the most important for this section; for in 'work' particularly, 'no man is an island entire of itself'. The same economic problems face the whole country, and no district, for example, has the right (in logic as well as in ethics) to discuss its industrial future and to clamour for new industries locally, without considering the effects of this upon the Development Areas and the rest of Britain.

P. G. H. H.

### SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Most of the references mentioned in Paragraphs I, II and III of the General Bibliography will be of value for this section, in addition to the following:

- Census of Population figures (with Occupation Tables).
- Census of Production figures. H.M.S.O.
- Local Labour Exchange returns.

Local Chamber of Commerce.

The nearest University Agricultural Department—often a source of useful monographs seldom available in general libraries.

Local Returns County Agricultural Committee (Parish files, by reference only). Obtainable from Ministry of Agriculture, Lytham St. Anne's, Lancs.

Annual Reports of H.M. Inspectors of Mines (issued regionally).

Waters' Report of the Advisory Committee on Sand and Gravel (issued regionally).

Report of the Mineral Development Committee. H.M.S.O. 1949.

Report of the Scott Committee on Land Utilisation. H.M.S.O.

Report of the Barlow Committee on Industrial Location. H.M.S.O.

K. S. Woods, *Rural Crafts of England*. (Harrap.)

Dorothy Hartley, *Made in England*. (Methuen.)

*General Views of Agriculture*, published by Board of Agriculture around 1800 for individual countries.

L. D. Stamp, *The Use and Misuse of the Land of Britain* (or better still, the relevant Land Utilisation County Memoirs from which this book was constructed). (Geographical Publications Ltd.)

National Farm Survey of England and Wales. 1946. (Purely statistical, containing figures by counties *re* farm size, land use, water supply, electricity supply, etc.)

*Agriculture*, the monthly magazine of the Ministry of Agriculture, often has local articles.

## SECTION V

### BUILDINGS

OF the four elements that make up our environment, the natural landscape, the people who inhabit it, the buildings and other material objects they have created, and the institutions and ideas that link or divide, it is usually buildings that make the deepest impression, since in their associations they sum up the past and present life of the community. Even so, our awareness is very often vague and perfunctory. The parish church is 'taken for granted', also the 'ruins' of priory or castle—useful to give their names to the local tea shops. The bridge, the inn, the market cross, the stump of the mill, provide a picturesque background for the family snapshots. The sixteenth-century farmhouse (now a couple of labourers' cottages), the large Georgian house (now a pair of shops), the successful Victorian tradesman's stucco villa, the 'railway' cottages, the 'Gothic' school, and the twentieth-century neo-Georgian bank, are dismissed as a 'picturesque muddled English street scene'. Yet these are living records of the economic and social past of the community, and, in their decoration and design, the changes in taste, and the rise and decline of local craftsmanship, can be followed. In their stones and tiles, thatch and timber-frames, as often as not they reveal the geological structure of the area; or, in the introduction of Welsh slate or Peterborough brick, reflect the coming of canal or railway.<sup>1</sup>

Practically every building older than the present century—i.e. before the mass production of materials, or of whole building units—is, in itself, a kind of organism with a life of its own which can be traced and interpreted. A building is not merely interesting through its associations with the life of a community, or of a particular family; it suffers continuous modification, structural or decorative, and each change usually reflects some change of habit or taste, ways of living or use. The sixteenth century inserted chimneys and ceilings; the seventeenth added panelling and plaster; the eighteenth specialised in new façades; the nineteenth in stucco and cement renderings, covering without distinction stone, flint, brick and even timber-frame or wattle and daub; while the twentieth century confines itself usually to plumbing and interior reconstruction—occasionally even stripping the accretions of the last hundred years.

For all these reasons the study of the buildings of a community can not

<sup>1</sup> On pp. 55 and 59–60 suggestions are made as to how these links can be illustrated.

only be a most popular approach to local studies, for it makes an immediate appeal, but in some ways it can be the most revealing. Apart from a few Midland areas this country is singularly rich in its building heritage; with the possible exception of central Italy and some parts of Germany, perhaps the richest in the western world. Yet the attitude of the British public, though generally appreciative, is often that of the sentimental excursionist, searching for 'ye olde and ye quainte', attracted more often by the sham than by the genuine; and one of the greatest services that local studies classes can render, is to place the appreciation of building on a genuine level, and through the study of their relationship to social history and natural environment to develop a deeper sense of their interest and value.

#### THE NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC SURVEYS

In any town or village, there are usually a number of buildings which can provide a focus or a point of departure for the consideration of almost any aspect of the community's past or present. The parish church, for example, was for centuries the centre of social life, belief and aspiration, later of conflict and tension, followed by indifference; its fabric usually preserves the best of local craftsmanship from many different periods. The same is true, though to a lesser extent, of other buildings such as market hall or manor, or buildings restored and preserved as museum pieces by public bodies. Such buildings are of obvious interest and are usually adequately described and recorded. Often, however, the records are scattered, and not easily accessible. A valuable contribution that can be made by a local studies group is the systematic collection of such material from county archaeologies early guide books, newspapers and county magazines, etc., and the presentation of it to the general public. How this can be done is discussed in some detail in Section VII.

This aspect, however, should hardly need stressing; many books deal with the study of parish church or manor and their relation to the social life of the past; and some of these are referred to in the bibliography. Within the limits of this outline, it seems more useful to offer a few suggestions which may help in the study of the less spectacular local buildings.

The varying richness and quality of different areas makes any stereotyped approach impracticable. But however poor or rich the area may be, it is urged that the study should be as systematic and as complete as possible. Not only is the practical need for records a matter for urgency, but a vigorous local studies group can do much to arouse public consciousness to the value and significance of our building heritage.

The first step should be a general survey of existing buildings using the most recent version of the 25" ordnance survey as a basis. In the case of a village, it would be possible to include the whole village in such a survey. In

towns only a small selected area is likely to be practicable, at least in the early stages. In any case, rather than to attempt to deal with an area incompletely, it is preferable to deal thoroughly with a small area, either the present town centre or some district where it is known that a large amount of old building still exists. In many towns the local surveyor, or in larger centres, the Town Planning Department, will have prepared general maps of the approximate building ages of different areas. These are, however, usually rather inaccurate general guides and are not based on any detailed analysis.

Within the area selected each building can then be given a number on the 25" map, and duplicated tracings made so that each member of the group can be responsible for a given section. A rough preliminary survey covering the materials used in each building, approximate dates, and the more obvious major reconstructions is not usually difficult and when plotted systematically on a series of maps will often reveal interesting variations and demonstrate how close is the relationship between the materials employed at different dates (or even in different parts of the same village), and the position of local quarries, the canal, or other sources of supply. A complete record of each building can then be compiled. The collection of exact information is not always easy, even in the case of comparatively recent buildings. The purely architectural history may be partly established from written records or tradition, but more usually can only be ascertained from a detailed examination of the building itself. In this case the dating can only be approximate, and the period and purpose of later alterations partly conjectured. Still more elusive are changes of use or ownership, but from the angle of social history such facts may be very significant.

The correlation of such material can best be done by a series of maps illustrating not merely the relative age of existing buildings, or the distribution of particular building materials, but also their change of use and status at different periods. In this way, with the help of early maps, a much more exact reconstruction of a community's development can be traced than is usually possible in any other way. Once records have been begun, further information can be added whenever it can be gathered. What is important is that systematic recording should at least be initiated, and from that point all subsequent changes, including total demolition, noted. Ideally, what should be aimed at is a log book for every building. In earlier days it was usual for the date at least, and sometimes the initials of the original builder to be inscribed on a tablet on the building itself. In parts of Austria today it is customary to record major subsequent changes in the same way. Consider the value now, if only in the case of one or two fifteenth- or sixteenth-century cottages in every village a log book had been kept recording each vicissitude of ownership or use, and the cost and reason for every addition or alteration. Is it too much to suggest that in the twentieth century the custom of keeping

a log book might be generally established at least in the case of houses older than the present century, with the blank pages of the past filled in as far as possible? Members of local study groups can, for themselves, at least, start such a log, and suggest it to others.

The next step towards a comprehensive survey should be the consultation of the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest scheduled under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. The offices of the local Urban or Rural District Authority should possess not only the completed list, but the correspondence involved in the final decisions as to whether particular buildings were to be included in the official list or not. The correspondence itself is often illuminating and the final lists may be very different from the first tentative schedule. The comments and reasons given for listing each building need to be noted. The list itself is divided into three categories—category one—buildings of national importance; category two—buildings of such interest that permission for alteration or demolition rests with the Ministry; and category three—buildings recommended to the notice of the Local Authority as worthy of protection, but where decisions are left to the Local Authority. Though the compilation of these lists is an important step in the right direction, two points should be noted. First, the conditions under which the lists have been prepared were unfavourable to a really comprehensive or balanced assessment. The investigators carrying out the survey had no right of entry, and buildings can rarely be adequately judged merely from an external examination. Furthermore, the standards adopted have varied greatly from one area to another; there being a tendency in an area still rich in examples from past centuries for buildings to be passed over which in a less favoured district would certainly have been listed. The second point to note is that only the most casual summary of the buildings' architectural history or interest is attempted. There is no detailed analysis. A local studies group, therefore, that undertakes a building survey should certainly not assume that nothing further need be done with regard to scheduled buildings. On the contrary, a great deal needs to be done, both in the further analysis of these buildings, and in making the general public aware of the facts. Nor can local authorities, or even the Ministry be relied upon to act as the all-wise guardians.

An example of the kind of vigilance necessary can be given from a recent experience. A farm-house threatened with immediate demolition in the Sussex area was examined by the WEA local studies group and was found to contain a medieval hall house of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Yet this building had in fact been scheduled as a sixteenth- to seventeenth-century farm house, under Category 2, and permission to demolish had been granted by the Ministry without further examination, on the request of the local body concerned—a request which, incidentally, had emphasised virtually

non-existent structural defects and deterioration. The building has been temporarily saved, and the Ministry's decision revoked, entirely as a result of the interest and vigilance of the WEA local studies group.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the study and analysis of existing buildings, a record should be attempted of those which have been demolished or replaced. As an example, the case of two bridges recently rebuilt by a local authority in my own area can be quoted. Only through the personal recollection of the surveyor responsible could the materials of which the demolished bridges had been constructed and the probable local source of their stone be verified. Records of this kind are not usually retained either by public bodies or private individuals. Many instances could be given of cottages and farm buildings which have been pulled down, within the last few years, where, but for written notes made at the time, uncertainty would now exist both as to materials, form and construction. Much can be done by a local studies group to counter this continuous destruction and loss of records.

Occasionally pictures and drawings in private hands may be discovered from which a record may be built up, but more often opportunities are lost because it is no one's responsibility. A few months ago, for example, a house in a West Sussex village with a nineteenth-century tile-hung exterior was being repaired, and the tile-hanging was stripped for a couple of days, revealing a fine example of Tudor timber-framing. Many of the villagers noticed and were impressed by this revelation, but no record was taken, no photograph, no drawing—it was no one's responsibility.

It is dangerous to assume that public buildings are immune from this kind of unrecorded fate. Again, two local examples will perhaps suffice. An interesting early nineteenth-century house was acquired by a local authority for demolition before the war, but two years after the war was converted to another use, and considerably modified. The local studies group formed in this centre has found it impossible to obtain any adequate photographs or drawings of the building as it was before the alterations were made. The second is an even more striking example: a local workhouse, which tradition states was built by French prisoners during the Napoleonic war, and which was an exceedingly pleasant-looking building unique in plan, construction and the combination of materials used, was totally demolished to give place to a school. No adequate pictorial record can now be traced, though all the local residents were conscious of its unique character and still recollect it quite clearly.

Attempts at recording should not, however, be limited to the old or the

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, the Ministry's permission to demolish has been regranted; but at least time was gained in which records could be made of a building which would have disappeared without anyone being even aware of its age, or its architectural and historical significance.

spectacular; the record of a 1930 'pull up' café, or a 1950 bus shelter may be of considerable interest years hence, though we may hope that the buildings themselves will have disappeared. To quote from Professor Simmons's introduction to the 'County Survey' series: 'The erection of the tram standards and the arrival of the chain stores are just as much a part of history as the building of a half-timbered town hall or of the parish church'.

#### CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND PLANNING

The discussion of contemporary design or town-planning can often best be introduced by an examination of the changes which have taken place during the past century. Very often it is not until a building has disappeared that we become interested in a particular grouping or street façade which no longer exists. In many cases it is still possible to trace these changes and to follow the piecemeal development of the present lay-out by the collection of early photographs and drawings. The comparison of these with a picture taken from identical points is one way of clarifying in our minds changes that have taken and are taking place, and of assessing the value of alterations envisaged under current development plans. A class can not only render a service by helping to rescue such material, but can take the initiative in arranging for its public exhibition, with, of course, appropriate critical comments. (See Example 4, between pp. 56-57.)

Again, the survey of existing buildings should in no way limit itself simply to a consideration of their past. It needs to be related to the present and future, to recent evolution in house-design and to changing domestic habits, and their influence on interior planning. The standards laid down by local sanitary authorities in the first decades of the century should be compared with the standards operative today: and their effects on plan and design noted. Useful field-work can include the investigation of the attitudes (of occupants) to different types of post-war housing—information which in places may even lead to improvements in design and lay-out; preferences as between terraced lay-outs with communal open space and more open planning with sizeable individual gardens, and so on—all matters on which opinion will be found to vary from area to area. Other aspects such as variations of rent—anomalies created by the operation of the rent-restriction acts, variations in rating assessments, the percentages of houses owner-occupied against those owned by local authorities or individual landlords or estate companies, the continuity of occupation, over-crowding—these and similar topics will recommend themselves for consideration to groups interested in immediate social and economic problems.

Another possible aspect for study is the changes in the use and relative cost of different types of building material. The decline in local traditions in building has been due to two facts. First, the relative cheapness of

mass-produced materials, whether bricks or tiles or pre-fabricated parts such as window-frames, etc.; and second, the actual disappearance of local craftsmen, capable of maintaining the local tradition. Here and there a local builder may have managed to withstand the general pressure. In my own neighbourhood a flint knapper is still maintained by an old-established local firm, but only through the support of a certain section of the community which is concerned with such crafts and possesses the economic means of satisfying its preferences. In some areas, such as the Cotswolds, local authorities have availed themselves of the financial concessions allowed by the Ministry, where local materials in conformity with an established local tradition are used. But in many districts where an equally good case could be made, nothing is done; pre-cast concrete slab walls rise at the confines of villages built, hitherto, in local stone or flint. These and similar problems of contemporary design in building, as well as questions of siting and façade treatment, and all that follows from current conceptions of town-planning, form part of the very wide range of activity open to those prepared to get to grips with this vital aspect of local studies.

J. R. A.

#### SOME SUGGESTED BOOKS

Thomas Sharp, *The Anatomy of the Village*. (Penguin Books, 1946).

A. Needham, *How to Study an Old Church* (pp. 98-124).

V. Bonham-Carter, *The English Village*. (Penguin Books.) Can be recommended as simple introductions to village planning, church and domestic buildings, respectively.

The best historical study of domestic architecture in this country is Nathaniel Lloyd, *The History of the English House*.

His *History of English Brickwork* can also be recommended as a more detailed study of the use of a particular material.

A most valuable detailed study on a local basis is Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan *Monmouthshire Houses*. (National Museum of Wales.)

The Batsford series provides not only excellent general works such as:

Alfred Gotch, *The Growth of the English House*, but more detailed studies such as Pilcher, *The Regency Style*, and many other volumes.

W. H. Godfrey, *Our Building Heritage* (Faber 10s. 6d.), is a well-illustrated plea for reconditioning and preserving domestic architecture of the past.

T. D. Atkinson, *Local Style in English Architecture*. (Batsford.) Relates church design (mainly) to geology and the influence of local schools of masons and joiners.

Of the many recent books and pamphlets dealing with contemporary housing and planning the following H.M.S.O. publications can be recommended:

*Housing Manual* for general design and lay-out.

*Planning Our New Houses*—The Report of the Scottish Housing Committee.

*The Town and Country Planning Progress Report* (1951, 6s.), for general background to town and country planning.

The first two are well illustrated. The possibilities of preserving local traditions in building are discussed in both the Report of the Scottish Committee (pp. 11-13, 74-5, 96) and in the Report of the Dower Committee on National Parks.

A few county areas and a number of cities have so far been covered in a magnificently illustrated series published by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments—models of recording techniques so far as the architectural aspect is concerned.

The *Buildings of England* (ed. Nikolaus Pevsner), a series now being issued by Penguin Books, county by county, provides a general but comprehensive survey of buildings with outstanding interest.

The National Building Record Office, at present housed at 31 Chester Terrace, London, N.W.7, has been collecting photographs, and, in a few cases, architectural drawings and plans for ten years; its files are open to students and copies of photographs are obtainable quite cheaply. Its work is at present very incomplete and necessarily superficial, being dependent mainly on photographs supplied by local amateurs. Interiors and plans are very rarely included.

## SECTION VI

### SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS: LIVING TOGETHER

THE problems of living together will inevitably arouse the interest of most WEA groups, and the ramifications of modern society are so numerous that three years could profitably be spent on these questions alone. It might be hard, though, to reach agreement on the best order for such a study. One possible arrangement of the syllabus—though by no means a comprehensive one—will be found in Section IX, p. 71 and it is proposed to take this as a rough basis for the comments in this chapter. Lest any group should be tempted to decide that these questions and these alone are worthy of their attention, the caveat should be entered once again that none of the main aspects of local studies can be divorced from its fellows without itself losing a great deal. For example, even in his social relationships, man is still very much influenced by his natural environment. Those students inclined to dismiss this as academic theory might well read the very practical report of the Committee of Inquiry into Industrial Unrest—Command 8668 (1917). This report stated baldly 'In S. Wales . . . the life of the workers is conditioned at every point by the physical and geographical conditions of the district itself'—and then went on to discuss the effects of the steep, narrow valleys, which forced the workers into long thin lines of cramped, crowded houses. It stated unequivocally that the sense of community has been retarded by this 'line development' and by the absence of municipal centres. S. Wales is only one of many possible illustrations and it is seriously suggested that tutors should, where necessary, refuse to adopt too narrow a programme of study of social relationships. As the Herefordshire Survey says, 'the physical landscape is the warp upon which man's activities have woven the complex and varied cultural landscape of the present-day county'.

## ADMINISTRATION

If geography thrusts itself forward again in this section, so too does history, for if one begins, as in the specimen syllabus, with Parliamentary representation in the local area, the question of past changes in that representation will inevitably arise: and frequently the vicissitudes of local representation present quite the most pleasant way of grasping the real meaning of the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884. Anyone who has tried to teach the general history

of Reform in the abstract will appreciate the heightened interest arising from, say, a contemporary Press report of a pre-Reform election. Many local papers gave generous space to such items especially in the feverish days of 1831-32, and the arguments for and against Reform can often be studied in the full speeches of the candidates. Reports of Select Committee on cases of corrupt elections in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century can also make intensely interesting reading. The effects of franchise extension, of secret ballot and of changed constituencies upon the party representation of the area could be discussed, together with other relevant factors, national and local; and in some areas local peculiarities may evoke special interest—possibly in further boundary changes or in Proportional Representation.

Similarly, in the field of local government, whilst the general machinery should doubtless be studied, special attention could be devoted to the particular type(s) of authority through which the group finds representation, and to those proposals for local government reform which have the greatest local relevance. Here too an examination of the origins of our present system will be interesting and valuable; and a consideration of the changed and narrowed functions of the Justices of the Peace since Tudor days might well introduce a section either on the preservation of law and order in the past and present or on modern social services. The part played in the contemporary legal system by the different courts and magistrates, by the police and the Watch Committee could be explored—and the operation of the Legal Aid system and the jury system examined.

#### PLANNING

Whilst the administrative interaction between the individual and the community is under review, it would seem appropriate to deal also with the subject of Planning. Since this word has now become so heavily charged with emotion and prejudice, it may be preferable once again to approach the topic historically. It may allay some suspicions to realise that the Romans planned their cities, that Georgian landowners certainly planned their estates—even to the extent of moving whole villages. . . .

‘Some force whole regions in despite  
O’ geography, to change their site.’

Further, any monstrous local examples of unplanned development of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries should reconcile others to the need for some control. Moreover, an examination of the piecemeal and ineffectual legislation of 1909, 1919 and 1932, and of the vague proposals resulting from such Acts<sup>1</sup> might even persuade people to welcome (or at least consider

<sup>1</sup> e.g. under the 1932 Act, enough British land was zoned for building to house population of 291 million.

seriously) the ordered sanity of the war-time Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt Reports; and the good intentions of the subsequent Acts on Location of Industry (1945), New Towns (1940), Town and Country Planning (1947) and National Parks and Access to the Countryside (1949).

Even if this is hoping for too much, at least one may expect a more objective attitude towards the Development Plan than might otherwise have been adopted. The plan itself and the written statement which accompanies it, may indeed provide the most convenient methods of tackling the social aspects of the syllabus, since they assemble in one place much useful information on all the public utilities and social services, usually including maps of the present position and of future proposals. The eminent American authority, Lewis Mumford, has said 'By now the foreign observer has ceased to be astonished at the quality of thought that has gone into the surveys and plans for the redevelopment of urban England'. It would be a pity, therefore, if WEA students did not avail themselves of these researches and discuss carefully the specific schemes suggested. On some points the class may not feel qualified to express an opinion and it may well be worth while to invite some local experts on these topics to give more background information and to guide a discussion. But it would be a poor group without specialist knowledge on some of such topics as water, gas and electricity supply, waterborne sewerage, village halls, health clinics; and most members of every group feel themselves expert at designating the areas of great landscape value and at planning the future of local education.

## EDUCATION

On both these and similar subjects, a local group can and should play a part in creating public opinion, and therefore 'snap judgments' should be subjected to the ruthless criticisms of a class discussion. This is specially necessary in the case of education, where the stakes, after all, are higher than even the beauty of our countryside. The second avowed object in the WEA Constitution is 'Generally to further the advancement of education, to the end that all children, adolescents and adults may have full opportunities of the education needed for their complete individual and social development'. Yet, with education in its present state of flux, how many branches are taking this object seriously? Quite a number organised single meetings or one-day schools on the local Education Development Plans, but were such meetings qualified to express views without careful study of all the problems involved? And how many branches organised such careful study? In any case, economy has already enforced many modifications of the plans and in some areas the pressure of public opinion (it is to be hoped, after careful study) has forced other changes, such as reprieves for some of the smaller village schools. In

recent years the methods of selection at eleven have come under increasing bombardment (including Professor Tawney's attack at the Jubilee conference of the WEA) and now one of our leading parties is challenging the whole conception of the three-stream division at eleven. Education is in the melting-pot, nationally and locally, and could well figure very prominently in a local studies course.

Once again there can be immense value in the historical 'flash-back' from the present scene to the Dame Schools, and the British and National Schools. This gives, as usual, a sense of perspective and also, in this case, a consciousness of the fact that compulsory education is still in its infancy and that more growing pains and experimental ventures are to be expected. And whilst the group is considering the schooling of their youngsters, a critical appraisal of the facilities for further education could also be undertaken with profit. (The whole field of education is another point where the intertwining of topics will be evident, since density of population and expected population trends must enter into any serious discussion of future educational provision: but it is to be hoped that by this time the group will be inured to this feature of local studies—and may even be able to make a virtue of necessity by exploiting the overlappings for revision purposes and for encouraging individual research papers.)

At the same time, despite the WEA Constitution, there may be other groups who would prefer to concentrate their scrutiny on local housing provision, on the health services or on public assistance. Whichever way one turns in the local field there are topics of magnetic interest waiting to draw a group (or an individual student) into more detailed study of either the historical or the national background of the local problems.

In the less tangible spiritual and cultural aspects of society there is the same 'embarrassment of choice'; yet these aspects also can be given great opportunities for enriching our individual experiences, for creating a sense of community, and maybe for arousing our zeal to improve society. Sir John Maud once quoted A. E. Housman's couplet,

'I, a stranger, and afraid  
In a world I never made'

as epitomising the feelings of loneliness and impotence endemic in modern society, and went on to express the hope that adult education would help to dispel those feelings.<sup>1</sup> One would expect the economic and social aspects of local studies to help in this task—by ending the fear, the feeling of strangeness as we begin to understand and, in small ways, to make this world. But if we wish to understand our world fully, we must also appreciate that we are partly the product of communal traditions. We must be aware, for example,

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Elsinore UNESCO Conference on Adult Education.

of our religious heritage—and not only that of the Established Church but also of the many dissenting sects which have flourished in England and have been both proof and partial cause of British tolerance. The part played by organised religion in the past and present lives of the local population could prove a fascinating study, particularly if enough time and tact were available for a 'sample survey' of attendance at the various churches and chapels (with classification into age-groups, etc.), and also of other ways in which people spend their Sundays.

This question of the present alternatives to organised worship is linked with the wider one of the use of leisure in general, a question now assuming ever greater importance as the working-week shortens. The group, or parts of it, might well attempt some sort of Gallup Poll into the popularity of the various methods of recreation, investigating theatres, cinemas, pubs, clubs, gyms, dance-halls, television-viewing and so on. Reading as a rival relaxation might provide subjects for special research, say, into the 'catchment areas' of the local newspapers; or into the extent of local use of the Public Library service and of various private 'circulating libraries'. In one district, a local group have offered to help the County Library to clarify their classification of borrowings at the local branch library by attempting to subdivide the omnibus category of 'Fiction'. Thus for the first time it would become possible to avoid the dangerous tendency of official reports to treat all non-fiction reading as serious and praiseworthy, and all fiction as frivolous. Such a piece of work would involve a great deal of careful research, and a purist might argue that it is outside the scope of a local studies course and is more appropriate for a literature class: but few would deny its social value.

If some of the group are to examine indoor recreations in such detail, outdoor sports also should have their investigators. A contrast between the numbers in our parks taking part in active sport and those watching might be of general interest; and an analysis of the provision and use of local tennis-courts, cricket pitches and bowling-greens, etc., might if necessary lead to some definite pressure upon the providing local authorities. Again, the local history of sport can prove stimulating, and reports of the last local bear-baiting or cock-fighting, or of the first local cricket match are of more than entertainment value for the class. In the first few paragraphs of his *History of England*, Macaulay explains that he intends to deal with other matters besides the history of government—with useful and ornamental arts, the rise of religious sects, changes of literary taste, revolutions in dress, furniture, repasts and public amusements. 'I shall', he says, 'cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors.'

We are thus in good company when we cast our net wide; but in these forward-looking days a local studies group will almost certainly insist on

casting it into the future as well. In these more hypothetical discussions stress will doubtless be laid upon the potentialities of the proposed community centres for restoring to our nation the feeling of fellowship which seemed to vanish in the nineteenth century; and the great possibilities for adult education expansion in such centres will hardly escape a WEA group. Even if no centre is yet established in the area under review, some study of such experiments as the Peckham Health Centre and the various post-war community centres would well repay the labour, provided that the idea of adaptation and transplanting features to the local area is always to the fore.

It must be re-emphasised that no group could cover thoroughly all the topics we have discussed in this section in a period of three, or even six years. Possibly the most satisfactory solution to the overwhelming problem of 'so much to do and so little time' is again to be found in allocating certain topics for individual research and organising 'report evenings', either inside or outside normal class periods: but even then many gaps are bound to be left. Any class following the suggestions of this chapter or of Specimen Syllabus B will be aware of this incompleteness and these imperfections; and they will realise also that they are laying themselves open to reproaches of 'descending below the dignity' of many subjects. But like Macaulay they can be cheerful if by doing so they acquire a truer picture of life today.

Such studies may not be systematic—they cannot be exhaustive. But they may lead to the realisation that we are better able to criticise the present or assess the future through being conscious of the gradual and continuing process of change which has produced our institutions, our modes of life and even our ways of thought. They may develop in the group a spirit of socially purposeful research, worthy of a body like the WEA: a frame of mind bold enough to accept with Sir Patrick Geddes that 'Utopia lies in the city around us, and it must be planned and realised, here or nowhere, by us': but a frame of mind realistic enough to know that 'between the dream and the reality falls the shadow'. Perhaps the factor which can help most is the co-operation of a good mixed student-group, which should ensure the presence both of the visionary zeal to appreciate the 'dream' and also of the bitter experience needed for foreseeing and warding off the 'shadow'.

P. G. H. H.

#### SOME SUGGESTED BOOKS

To a great extent, the information for this section will have to be obtained locally, by class research. Some ideas on the type and scope of local research may be obtained from two very different books:

*Country Planning: A Study of Rural Problems.* Agricultural Economics Research Institute of Oxford. (Oxford University Press.)

*Local Studies for Schools.* Evans, Scarson and Williams. (Geo. Philip, 1948.)

The first is a good example of the finished product of a rural survey; the second is merely a list of questions, whose answers could provide the basis for a sound survey of any locality.

Other useful sources:

The County Development Plan Written Statements.

B. J. Collins, *Development Plans Explained.* (H.M.S.O. 1951.)

The Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt Reports. A useful summary of the last two reports is obtainable in *Country and Town* (Penguin Books); but urban classes are advised to examine the Barlow Report in full: *Report of the Royal Commission on Industrial Population.* (H.M.S.O. 1940.)

Two Bureau of Current Affairs pamphlets providing a useful introduction are:

No. 76. *Town and Country Planning.* Rachel Morrison.

No. 95. *The Use of the Land.* C. S. Orwin.

(These are out of print but should be obtainable at the Public Library.)

V. Bonham Carter, *The English Village.* (Pelican Books.)

W. P. Baker, *The English Village.* (Oxford University Press.)

J. R. Allan, *The Market Town.*

Students wanting further guidance are referred to the various examples of local surveys listed in paragraph V of the General Bibliography.

## SECTION VII

### PROJECTS AND PRACTICAL WORK

#### LOCAL STUDIES GROUPS AS CHANNELS OF INFORMATION

AT the back of the mind of every WEA tutor and class member, there usually lies the question 'How can the work we are doing, or the study under consideration, be related to the rest of the community?' The WEA continually stresses the need for social purpose, and the phrase is used to imply not only that certain subjects are more likely to lead to social action, but also that the kind of student attracted by certain studies is likely to use his knowledge to greater social purpose. No subject lends itself to immediate and effective social action so completely as local studies, since the local environment can be quite appreciably influenced by the individual, and still more effectively by an organised group.

In a sense every class, in whatever subject, should regard itself as a potential channel by which specialist knowledge can reach a wider public. The drama class that attempts to produce serious drama, or the international affairs class that arranges open meetings on some topical subject, realise that their responsibility does not end merely with the satisfaction of their own members. So in the case of local studies a group should consider how it can help the general public to become both more aware of the history and present structure of the local community and its setting in the region, and better informed as to the background of current local problems.

How can this best be done? There are no doubt many possible solutions, depending on local circumstances, but the description of one experiment in some detail may be of use as suggesting possible lines of approach.

#### CO-OPERATION WITH THE COUNTY LIBRARY: AN EXPERIMENT DESCRIBED

Some five years ago at an area conference on local studies the value of field-work was emphasised and its possible forms discussed. Following this discussion a scheme was evolved which seemed to meet some of the difficulties of making the work of a class of practical use, and of interesting the rest of the community in what was being done, while at the same time giving some permanence to the work. The scheme, which has been worked out in close co-operation with the County Library, is at present in the experimental

stage. It is limited to five centres where tutorial classes, or linked sessional classes dealing with local studies or local history have been formed. Two of these centres are large villages with populations of between three and four thousand: one is a rapidly growing town of five thousand; one an urban district of ten thousand; and one a municipal borough of seventy thousand. In the latter there is an adult education centre; in the other four are branches of the County Library.

#### THE USE OF PERMANENT DISPLAY PANELS

Display panels of framed millboard have been arranged in each of the above centres. The size of these panels varies from three to four feet in height and from four to six in width, and is limited by the wall space available—in three cases a chimney breast. The ideal size would appear to be seven or eight feet by four feet. In one centre the panel is glazed, with an oak frame, but experience has shown that framing is unnecessary for their protection. These panels are devoted exclusively to the illustration of chosen aspects of the environment, history, organisation, or present condition, of the local community. The material is pinned by staples and is changed approximately every three months, and is then filed in indexed portfolios and kept permanently in the Branch Library for reference. Each display is designed to be self-contained and self-explanatory.

#### SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

At first some attempt was made to relate one panel to the next by chronological sequence, or by some other link. This, however, was soon abandoned in favour of variety and contrast in subjects: this seems to arouse a livelier public interest. It also enables individual class members to pursue in their own time projects involving varying amounts of research, field-work, and preparation, without being tied to a time-table for their completion.

#### LOCAL RESEARCH SHOULD BE SET AGAINST A WIDE BACKGROUND

The aim is twofold. First, original research and the collection of all material relating to the locality and the accommodation of this in one centre generally known and accessible. Second, the presentation of this material, or of selected aspects of it in a form likely to interest and be readily understood by the general public. Little needs to be said concerning the first. Local research and field-work are the obvious 'extra' class activities, which a local studies group should aim at encouraging. Through the discussion and analysis of such local

material, the problems, difficulties and the general technique of historical research, or of any accurate analysis of the contemporary world, can be better understood.

#### RELATING THE LOCAL TO THE REGIONAL AND GENERAL

The second point is important. As has been pointed out earlier, class work should not be confined to such local projects as may be taken for field-work, nor should the latter neglect continual reference to the general background. Examples between pp. 56-57 will illustrate what is meant by this.

#### THE NEED FOR ATTRACTIVE VISUAL PRESENTATION

Some thought should be given to clear and attractive visual presentation—the use of colour where possible, good lettering, the avoidance of overcrowding and monotony. A good deal of material, valuable from the point of view of a complete record, may be filed in the appropriate folder without ever being displayed on a panel. A coloured drawing, for example, may be displayed rather than a photograph, but in this case a photograph should certainly be filed, if this is possible, thus providing corroboration and sometimes more correct information.

#### SOME EXAMPLES

One advantage of this scheme and the filing system described is that the work inaugurated by the class, can be maintained indefinitely and permanent records continuously built up as new material comes to hand; while from the point of view of the class it provides opportunity for field-work and research, and written work of a kind which possesses permanent value. In every panel an attempt is made to observe the principles already stressed—the linking of the local to the regional (or national), of present to past. It is, perhaps, easiest to indicate what is meant by giving one or two examples. (Plates 1, 2, 3 and 4.)

Example: 1 (size 84" × 42"). This is the first of a series of three panels dealing with the geology of an area centred round a small coastal town. It consists of two series of maps with the necessary explanatory texts. The first series sets the local geological structure in time, the second in space, the latter by a series of maps starting with a general geological map of the United Kingdom (in colour obtainable from the Geological Museum, price 6d.), and ending with the local six square miles on the scale of six inches to one mile, each map being related by connecting coloured threads to its larger scale successor. The panel is self-contained and self-explanatory, but a few references are given to books and journals where further details can be found.

Transcripts of passages relating to the area, taken from standard works, together with other references, can be added and kept up to date. In this way, a record and documentation of the geology of the immediate area is established. A second and a third panel, completing the geological picture of the area, have also been prepared. One completes the local survey by illustrations of all known exposures, chalk, sand, gravel and clay pits, and road cuttings, including records of exposures recently covered up; the other consists mainly of sectional drawings of local well borings and illustrations showing the influence on building of geological factors, and the sources of local building materials such as chalk, flint, stone, clay. A fourth panel is projected, designed to show the relationship of local agriculture—size, lay-out of farms, land use and productivity, etc., to geology. A more revealing treatment—which cannot be adequately illustrated—has been adopted by another group. In this a six-inch air mosaic<sup>1</sup> map has been substituted for the ordinary six-inch map. Superposed by a hinge on this, is a lightly tinted 'Ethulon' transparency indicating the geological strata and the position of well borings, rock exposures, etc.

Example 2: This panel (80" × 48") contains everything that could be collected concerning the history of one house. It draws attention to the points of architectural interest and relates the house, its construction and decorative detail, to others in the area. This material might have been laid out more regularly as a sequence of squares and rectangles. Instead the device of using a decorative feature of the house itself as a framework has given the material a more striking appearance and has certainly led many to look more closely and follow the text.

Example 3: (size 80" × 48"). This is one of four panels recording the history of the local canal. The section illustrated covers the first three miles. The general text at the beginning relates briefly the building of the local canal to the general background of canal building in the 1790s. Part of the panel contains a transcript of the opening pages of the Act of Parliament authorising its construction, together with a summary of the rest, and a photostat facsimile of the title page (provided by the County Records Office). The map is a copy in colour of the original map of the canal preserved among the archives of the local manor. The central theme of the whole series is the relationship of the canal in its present condition to its past, and the tracing of the causes and the stages of its decline. This panel is another example of an attempt to make as attractive a lay-out as possible.

This project also demonstrates the urgent need for systematic recording. While the data was being collected the weir at one of the locks was dismantled for the sake of the stone it contained; other remains are threatened and disintegrating. Perhaps the most surprising result was the large num-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 64.

ber of local residents who expressed astonishment that a canal had ever existed.

Example 4: (size 60" × 42"). This is one of a series of a dozen or more panels analysing and recording one by one the buildings of a single street. It is an example of an intensive approach to the study of local buildings in which their past history is examined as completely as possible. It has already disclosed the fact that a number of buildings externally of little apparent interest conceal behind nineteenth-century brick exteriors the complete frames of sixteenth-century jettied timber houses. A systematic survey of the kind illustrated here should deal with every building, however recent or featureless. The value of such a record for the future is in part its comprehensiveness. The buildings of outstanding interest are in any case more likely to be preserved and recorded, but in each age they are part of a changing setting which may pass unrecorded, particularly in villages and small towns threatened by rapid and often drastic alteration. Such records where carried out, should be of great interest and value in the future.

Of these four examples the first two are mainly reconstructive, bringing together the results of research already published but scattered. The last two involve a large measure of field-work and the collection of material not otherwise recorded. Both aspects are important when considering the kind of work a local studies group can undertake and will vary in their appeal according to individual temperaments and local conditions.

These examples indicate briefly the general method adopted. It so happens that in each of the four panels chosen for illustration, most of the members of the classes concerned made a contribution. A good many projects, however, are best carried through by two or three class members working in close co-operation. The whole class should, however, take part in any discussion of final lay-out, or of the emphasis to be given in the text to different points, or of the kind of material suitable for public display. This type of discussion can be a useful exercise in which those who have now mastered the facts and complexities of the subject can consider the kind of simplification necessary if the subject is to be easily understood, and made interesting to those lacking that background. In this way the class shares a problem which is usually exclusively that of the teacher, an experience which in itself can be quite valuable.

#### SCOPE AND CONTINUITY OF SUCH WORK

Some indication of the scope and possibilities of practical work of this kind can perhaps best be suggested by a tabulation with brief comments of projects which in one centre have been discussed as fitted for this kind of treatment and for which material is being collected by class members. In each case the subject has been chosen because material has been discovered which

either had not so far been published or recorded, or had not previously been gathered together. This village has a population of between three and four thousand. Projects, involving hitherto unpublished or unrecorded material, include:

(i) The history of the local Turnpike Trust, the main source being the Minute Book of the meetings of the Trust Commissioners during the half century following its formation—a large leather-bound volume which was rescued during the war from a barrow load of books and papers en route to the local paper salvage centre.

(ii) The local workhouse, built in the seventeenth century as a gentleman's house, converted sometime in the eighteenth century to a poor-house, and finally in 1931 turned into a school. This example illustrates the ease with which information can be lost. It has not only been impossible to date, even approximately, its conversion into a workhouse, but it has proved exceedingly difficult to obtain any records of its organisation, routine, dietary, etc., even for the years immediately before 1931, or to trace those still living who were connected with its administration.

(iii) The local railway—doomed soon to become derelict like the canal.

(iv) The communal water supply—including its early history—remarkable as an example of an early system of piped water in a rural area (dating back to the fifteenth century).

(v) The Town Hall. The present building is only the last of a series, and itself has been modified since its erection in the early nineteenth century. Drawings in private hands have been discovered of the earlier building.

(vi) The growth of the community, commencing with a large-scale early seventeenth-century manorial map, and ending with the latest revision of the 25" ordnance map brought up to date, every map being reduced to the 25" scale.

(vii) A Survey of Agriculture and Industry, projected as a series of four or five panels dealing, amongst other things, with changes of land use, size of farms, agricultural employment, and the record of certain industries, such as iron and glass, which once flourished in the neighbourhood.

(viii) A panel based on a recently discovered early eighteenth-century map of a projected lay-out of the adjacent Manor Park. It illustrates the dramatic change from formal to natural landscaping. The working out of this panel led to the planning of two further projects. One, an examination and analysis of local enclosures in the eighteenth century; the second an archaeological exploration of a small hamlet destroyed in the eighteenth-century emparking but clearly indicated on the map—a hamlet of which no trace survives above ground.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Beresford's *Lost Villages of England* lists several hundred villages, mainly in the Midland areas, of which little or no trace remains.

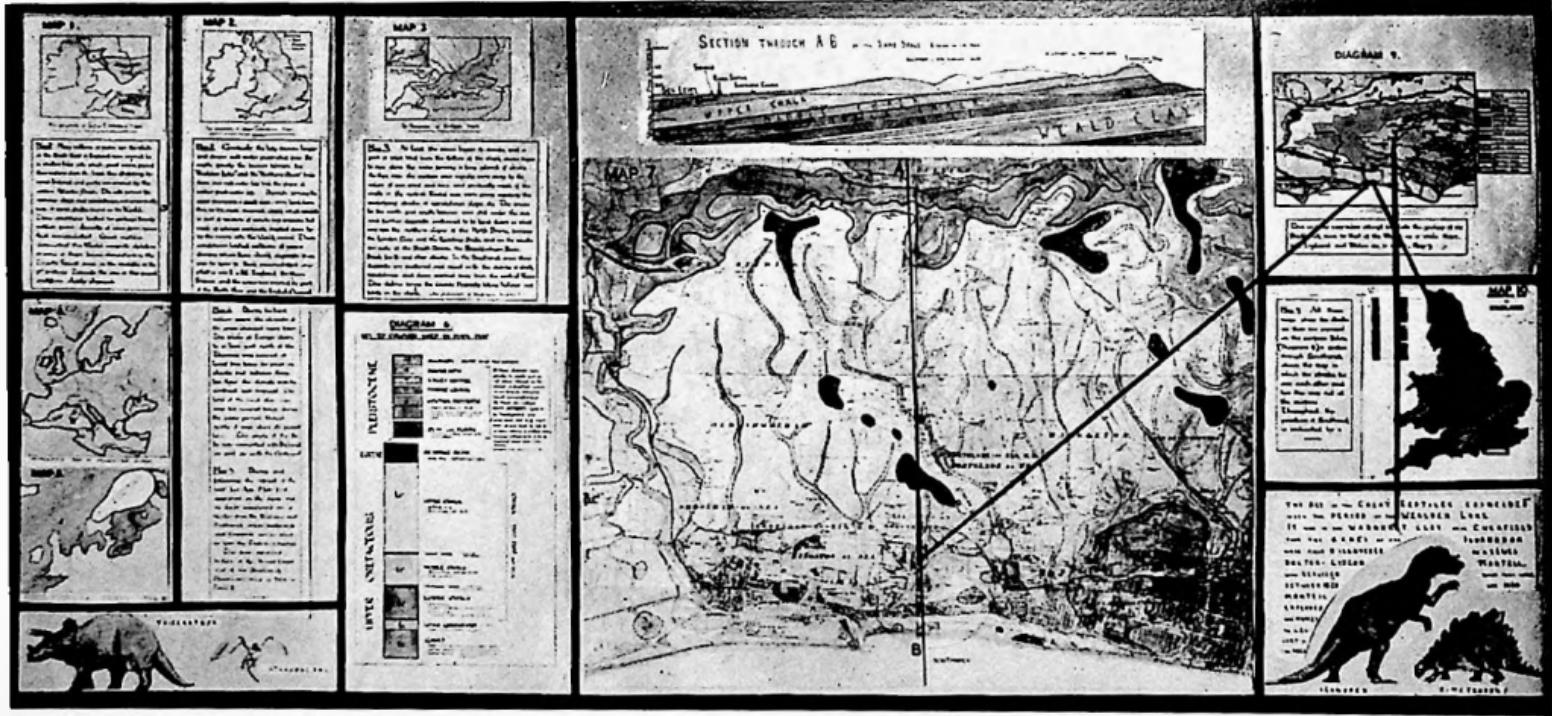


PLATE I

This and the following three illustrations are examples of different methods adopted in setting out the material in the form of display panels. They are described on pages 53 to 55. Quality varies a good deal, as is inevitable in co-operative work. Lettering is best illustrated in 2 and 3; layout in 1, 2 and 4.

W.E.A. THIS PANEL ILLUSTRATES THE HISTORY OF MIDHURST AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

EACH EXHIBITION WILL DEAL WITH A SINGLE SELF-CONTAINED TOPIC AND THE MATERIAL WILL BE FILED IN THE LIBRARY FOR REFERENCE AFTERWARDS

W.E.A.

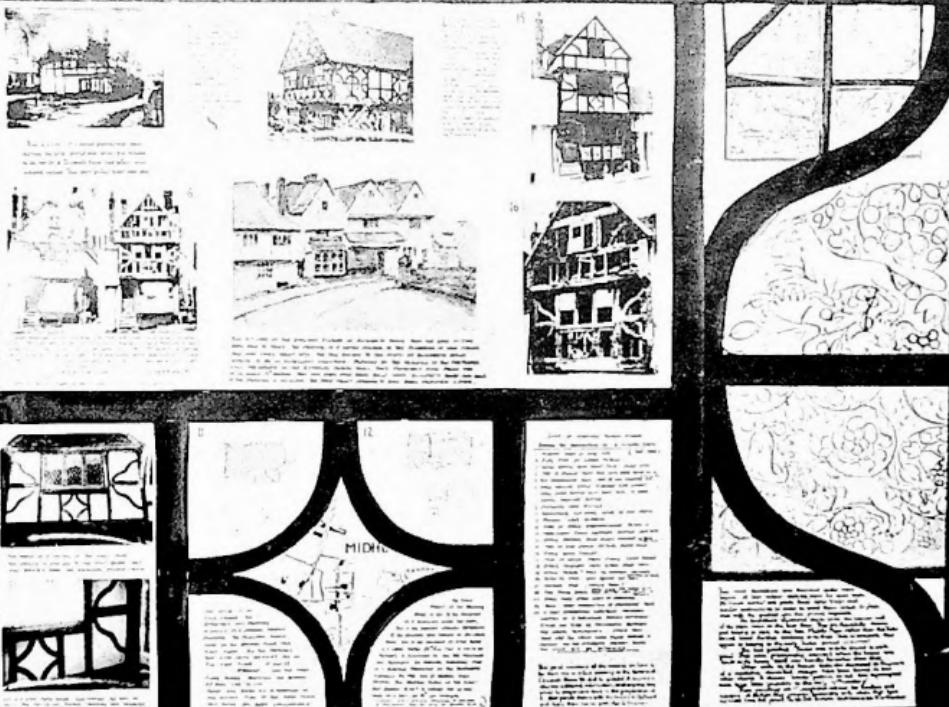
### ELIZABETH HOUSE

as it is now called is a fine example of small timber frame town dwelling. And probably dates from the first part of the 16th century

It was recently occupied by Mr. John House which indicates it on the North side were pulled down

At that time the timber frame construction was hidden by a skin of thick plaster which appears to have been added in the 18th century

The ground floor is large together with the first or lower floor which contains the house in its original form



W.E.A.

THIS PANEL ILLUSTRATES THE HISTORY OF MIDHURST AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD  
EACH EXHIBITION WILL DEAL WITH A SINGLE SELF-CONTAINED TOPIC AND THE MATERIAL WILL BE FILED IN THE LIBRARY FOR REFERENCE AFTERWARDS

W.E.A.

## THIS PANEL DESCRIBES THE DISUSED ROTHER NAVIGATION CANAL WHICH LINKED MIDHURST TO THE SEA

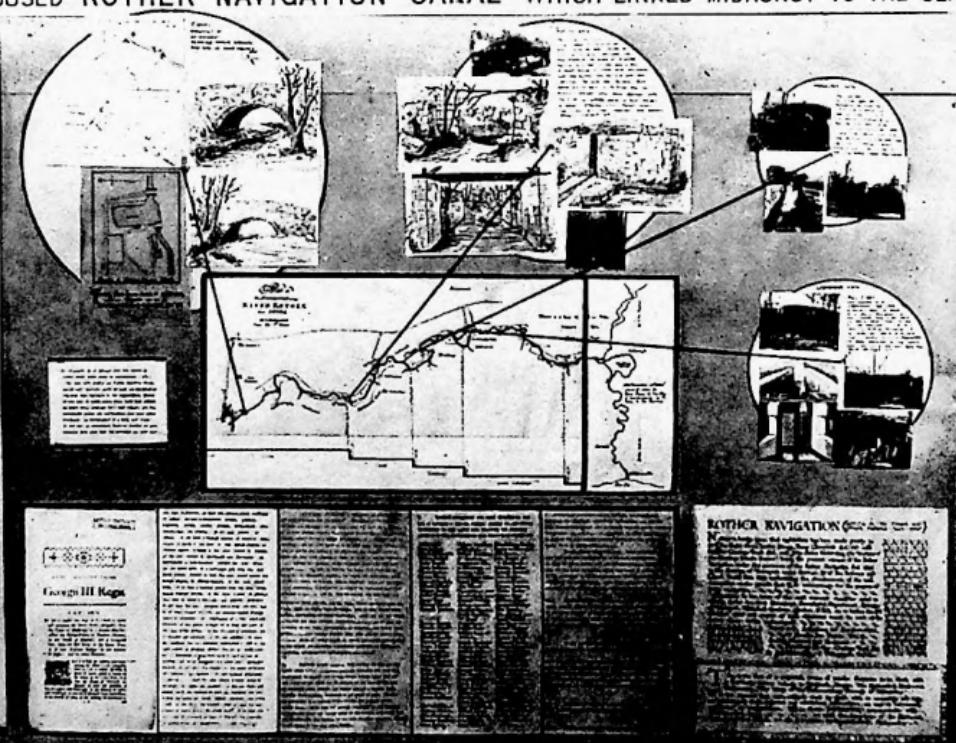
### THE ROTHER CANAL

The period between 1760-1792 was one of most intensive canal building all over the country. In 1791 Midhurst committee licensing documents copied at these visitors' points now preserved in the Library. The canal was built and owned by the Duke of Portland to link his estates in Chichester with Shoreham but proved such a success that its opening in 1772 that a series of speculative schemes in this new and cheap form of transport. The Rother Canal, by linking Midhurst with the Arun, they closed at Shoreham. It provided Midhurst not merely with water communication with the coast but eventually... with London and the rest of the country. The scheme of the Duke of Portland and the Earl of Chichester was to link the rivers Arun and Rother and so to shorten the route of shipping from the south coast of England to the Mediterranean.

The costs of construction were relatively high compared with the TUNBERY RAILWAY or even - at a later date - the RAILWAYS. The preliminary work of surveying and dredging, parliamentary sanction was also costly. In the case of the Rother Navigation the whole cost was borne by George III's Earl of Egremont, one of the most active local landowners of the period. He was concerned mainly with paper for the mills he had brought to his properties in the valley, which of course would greatly increase the value of his own landholdings.

The Duke of Portland finally obtained the original Act of Parliament authorising the construction of the canal and laying down conditions for its regulation etc. A copy of the Act is shown on the Surveyor's County Boundary Office at Chichester. The Duke of Portland's nearly £100,000 project took 12 years to complete due to his reluctance to let contractors to work on the canal at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. We also include a copy of the original map of the canal (not necessarily among the earliest of Rotherham's maps). We have also included some comments by Arthur Young, in his Report on Fanner Agriculture to the Board of Agriculture (published in 1795) regarding the canal and its effect on agriculture. The Duke of Portland's £100,000 sum was enough to buy him approximately or possibly the creation of the canal as they used today (2007) in the eastern Johnson's the boundaries of Midhurst is the last border of Shoreham. The editor of the annual Johnson's Philip & Thomas Johnson's in a chapter given by the Rotherham Local History Society in 1988 to honour contributions to the history of the Rother.

COUNTY LIBRARY





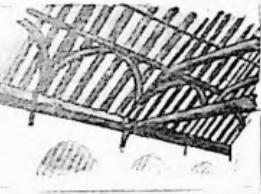
The houses shown in the photograph were built in the early 16th century. They are typical examples of the Tudor style, characterized by their timber-framed construction with exposed beams and brick chimneys.



This drawing illustrates the timber-framed structure of a Tudor building, showing the complex arrangement of beams and posts supporting the upper floors and roof.



This detail shows the timber-framed roof of a Tudor building. The drawing highlights the complex timberwork used in the roof construction, including the timber beams and trusses.



This detail shows the timber-framed roof of a Tudor building. The drawing highlights the complex timberwork used in the roof construction, including the timber beams and trusses.



This photograph shows a Tudor-style building with a tiled roof and a central chimney stack. The building has a timber-framed structure with exposed beams and a tiled roof.



This photograph shows a Tudor-style building with a tiled roof and a central chimney stack. The building has a timber-framed structure with exposed beams and a tiled roof.



This photograph shows a Tudor-style building with a tiled roof and a central chimney stack. The building has a timber-framed structure with exposed beams and a tiled roof.



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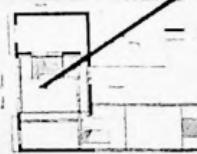
This photograph shows a Tudor-style building with a tiled roof and a central chimney stack. The building has a timber-framed structure with exposed beams and a tiled roof.



This photograph shows a Tudor-style window frame with a decorative mullion. The window is made of timber and has a decorative mullion.



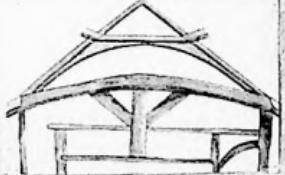
This photograph shows a Tudor-style window frame with a decorative mullion. The window is made of timber and has a decorative mullion.



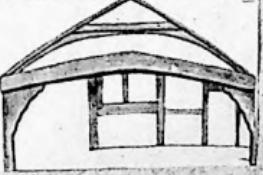
This photograph shows a Tudor-style window frame with a decorative mullion. The window is made of timber and has a decorative mullion.



This photograph shows a small, square stone structure, possibly a well or a chimney base.



This photograph shows a Tudor-style building with a timber-framed roof structure.



This photograph shows a Tudor-style building with a timber-framed roof structure.

(ix) The story of the local 'House of Correction' which was erected as an overflow from the County Gaol towards the end of the eighteenth century, and, after being partly demolished in the nineteenth century, converted to a private dwelling. In this instance, drawings—made soon after its erection and found preserved in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum—have been copied. Various items dismantled at the time, such as the tower clock and the wrought-iron gates, have been tracked down and found incorporated into other buildings in the neighbourhood. The prison plan and the records of dietary, costs, regulations, and routine shed an interesting light on the social history of the period.

(x) A record and explanation of the heraldic devices on buildings, in the church and on monuments, and their association.

(xi) A record of the Inns, including not merely existing inns but two which have disappeared or been partly incorporated into later buildings; plans and drawings of these have been found in private hands, including coaching broadsheets, giving times, fares, etc., and some interesting and amusing Press references.

(xii) At least thirty buildings deserve treatment, many of them meriting separate panels. It is also proposed to prepare two or three panels to illustrate the evolution of the cottage and small house from the early Middle Ages to the present time. This particular village is perhaps fortunate in containing examples from each century from the thirteenth to the eighteenth, while for the last two hundred years a very complete account can be given, concluding with a comparison of the council houses built just before the war with those now under construction.

(xiii) The church. It is surprising how frequently the one building most accessible to the public is least explained. Usually a few perfunctory notes with possibly a plan, often not that, may be supplied in the building itself. In a neighbouring village, though the church reflects every century since the eleventh, no guide, not even a plan exists. The group, therefore, is preparing a series of four panels: the first is an introduction based on early drawings illustrating general changes in its setting and structure since the end of the eighteenth century. Each drawing is accompanied by a photograph taken from the same point today. The second is a series of nine coloured plans tracing the evolution of the church (and its decay in the eighteenth century) accompanied by details illustrating each period represented in the plans. The third is an architectural analysis of certain features of particular interest, and their relationship to comparable work of the same period in other churches in the area. The fourth deals with various other items of interest—pulpit, screen, memorials and windows. Wherever possible details are related to other local examples and their significance explained. (The average printed church guide, for reasons of space, always takes much too much for granted,

wall-tile hanging, thatch and roof tiling. These panels will trace the evolution of decoration and local craftsmanship within each medium, and the various forms in which these are still used locally at the present time.

These examples are only intended as an illustration of method; whatever aspect of the local scene is chosen for detailed treatment by the class—the population, the natural history or ecology, the economic background or the changing cultural pattern—an appropriate technique of presentation can usually be found. The important point to be realised is that in order to capture the interest of the general public, an attractive visual appeal is essential, and the balance between the verbal and the visual presentation of facts needs careful planning.

#### CONTINUITY OF THE CLASS

A question which will by now have suggested itself, to those who have read so far, will be, "How is work which may occupy so long a period to be maintained?" Assuming that any formal local studies class must come to an end, what organisation is to be set up to carry on the work initiated, and the interest engendered? It must be clear that there cannot be any precise answer. Local circumstances must be the determining factor, but there seems to be in general three possibilities—or perhaps we should regard them as stages. The class can continue as a formal class through a long series of specialist but related studies; it can be kept together informally by meeting the tutor when convenient for the purpose of discussing research projects, recommendations as to reading, etc.; or it can continue under its own steam either as a group within the WEA or as a separate local studies organisation affiliated to some other body—in some cases a County Historical or Archaeological Society may be appropriate, in others a County Committee for Local History. In this particular area when formal class work has, for the time being at least, come to an end, the solution has been the second, and groups have been held together as terminal classes meeting nine or ten times a year on a monthly basis. This appears on the whole to be the best solution. It avoids the danger—in smaller centres, where only one regular weekly class is generally practicable—of a WEA group becoming 'bogged down' in an interminable series of sessional or one-year classes which cannot, however wide an interpretation is given to local studies, satisfy the interests of everyone.

#### LOCAL MUSEUMS AND INFORMATION CENTRES

There can be no question but that as an ultimate objective, every local studies group should envisage the establishment of a local museum or information centre. Unfortunately, the conception of a museum in the public mind is such that the term is best avoided. Although the present may not be

an appropriate moment to urge this as a general or immediate practical objective, it is certainly desirable that every town and village of any size should have a centre in which one room at least will be set aside devoted not only to the record and illustration of the history of the community, but also of its general setting in the contemporary world. The walls would be used to display maps explaining its geology, its ecology, its past growth, and plans for future development, the whereabouts of its historical buildings or examples of traditional domestic architecture, air photographs showing its relationship to the surrounding countryside, and so on. Such a centre would also contain cases of exhibits limited strictly to the illustration of the immediate surroundings, together with a library of reference volumes, portfolios of cuttings, transcripts and abstracts from rare books or manuscripts, in fact everything of significance written or known about that particular place. A few towns in this country have such a room or rooms; there are even some exceptional villages possessing a local 'folk' museum, but there are also many great cities, and the vast bulk of our smaller towns and villages that have nothing whatever resembling a centre of this kind. A great many 'local' museums, are local only in name, are badly arranged, provide no clear or connected picture either of the past or of the present, and for the most part are cluttered up with material which has no local significance whatever—war masks from Borneo, pottery from Northern Italy or Japan, rifles used in the Boer War, or Coronation Medallions of Queen Victoria. How many of us when we have been visiting a part of the country new to us have turned our steps hopefully to the 'local' museum—occasionally but not usually much advertised—only to find, when we arrive, this kind of thing, instead of the clear record of local history, features of interest, and a description of the regional setting we, perhaps naively, expected.

If local classes take their responsibilities seriously, they can do an enormous amount to help rectify this state of affairs, and to realise what may now seem the impracticable ideal of a local studies centre<sup>1</sup> in every community, however small. This is something which any real advance of culture would take for granted and which any civilised community, no longer hag-ridden by the fear of war and economically crippled by preparation for defence, could take in its stride. The scheme described in this section does however provide an immediately realisable compromise, and the material assembled would form a nucleus for such centres should they become practicable.

<sup>1</sup> This is not a satisfactory phrase to describe what is meant, but the alternatives seem even less so; 'Local Information Centre' implies something much too contemporary and superficial, or frankly utilitarian and commercial; 'Local Records Centre' something too purely historical and literary, a storehouse of unexplained and disconnected documentary material: while 'Local Museum' is unsatisfactory for reasons already given. But whatever we decide to call it, the first requirement is simply a room—if possible associated with the local library, community centre or village hall.

It is not suggested that every village or town should be encouraged to devote its leisure to the contemplation of its own navel; but an intimate knowledge of one's own community does provide a background against which other towns and villages, or society as a whole, can be more clearly seen and understood.

J. R. A.

#### NOTE ON BOOKS

A general book list is obviously impracticable for this section, but whatever kind of local inquiry is tackled, books which will provide the general background, or regional setting, are usually to be found—though not always.

The number of excellent monographs of this type steadily increases. For example, at the time of writing two books have just been published—*The English Windmill* by Rex Wailes (Routledge and Kegan Paul) and *British Railway History* by Hamilton Ellis (Allen and Unwin). These add excellent general works to the dozen or so already existing (some of them regional in treatment) on each of these subjects.

## SECTION VIII

### VISUAL AIDS AND OTHER ACCESSORIES TO LOCAL STUDIES

#### USE OF VISUAL AIDS

LOCAL studies cannot be dealt with adequately without a very extensive use of visual aids, though the aids may vary from the blackboard, wall charts, maps and diagrams to episcope or lantern slides. All these methods have their particular value and appropriate use; but in local studies most of the illustrative material must be local. It is true that the local records should be related to the regional and national, but a course ceases to be a local studies course unless the bulk of the illustrative material is local in origin.

How are classes and teachers to obtain the necessary material? In some areas the problem is being tackled by the formation, through the County Authorities, of libraries of slides, film-strips, and other visual aids which are then made available for the use of teachers in the area. In one or two WEA districts the Joint Committee for Adult Education or the Extra-Mural Department of the University are building up similar collections: but even such collections are bound to be of a general regional character, and the tutor who is concerned with a particular area is faced with the problem of providing his own material, if a course is to be adequately illustrated.

Perhaps it is desirable that every tutor in local studies should himself become an amateur photographer, but there are fortunately other possibilities. In any group there are fairly certain to be two or three members who are interested in photography, are prepared to co-operate with the tutor in collecting material, and are quite often pleased to find a socially useful purpose for their hobby. If the tutor, well before a class starts, can discuss with them some of the material required, and then as the class proceeds continue to 'commission' further pictures, the problem can be largely solved. Unfortunately, no funds are usually available to meet the out-of-pocket expenses, but both authors have found in their classes several students willing to help greatly in this way, with no thought of the expense involved.

#### OTHER PICTURES

In addition to specially-commissioned photographs, it is possible for a group to build up a very useful collection of local views from picture-postcards, old snaps, Press photos and book illustrations. On occasion, permission

can be obtained to copy aerial survey views and other useful photos on 2" or 3½" slides, but even if that is not practicable, the photos may be used in an episcopic or passed round before being stored for reference in special folders.

The careful examination of local photographs, like local studies as a whole, can have a twofold value. Not only does it aid the true appreciation of the subject in question, but it develops, through its local applications, a technique which can be used generally. A skilful analysis of the geology, architecture, archaeology implicit in local views will develop in the students a seeing eye which can then be used on views of more distant areas. Examples of such analysis of landscape are to be seen in some of the illustrations in Chapter 2 of the Herefordshire Survey already quoted. There an annotated sketch accompanies each landscape photograph, and identifies the main geological, geographical and agricultural features. This technique may not be required in a class where slides can be projected and discussed by the group, but it might well be used in cases where visual aid equipment is not available.

Aerial photographs deserve special mention for their value not only in the study of local geology, agriculture or land use, but also for archaeology, early settlement and natural history. Some of the country has been mapped by the Air Ministry in an overlapping sequence of air photographs on a scale of 1: 10,000 (6" to 1 mile). These photographs (measuring roughly 8" × 7") are obtainable from the Air Ministry (exact grid references should be given), but unfortunately the production of the larger Air Mosaic Maps by the Ordnance Survey has recently been discontinued. In addition, some very fine aerial views can often be obtained from commercial firms (see Bibliography, p. 77).

#### FILMS AND FILM-STRIPS

Films deserve a brief mention since some parts of the country are now very well illustrated in that medium. Some references are given in the Bibliography at the end of the booklet, but special attention may be drawn to the six 'Pattern of Britain' films mentioned which depict different British regions; to the four 'Farming Seasons' films; and to the National Savings Committee's series of films of separate English counties.

Commercial film-strips vary greatly in quality, but investigation of the catalogues of the main firms is certainly advisable, and one or two examples could be shown to the class, if only to stimulate them to produce a more useful local strip themselves.

#### MAPS

So far we have stressed pictures, but maps deserve a special mention in local studies. Here is another instance where the students can help immensely

—the artistic by making maps (preferably large ones for public display), the photographers by copying (with permission) any useful reference maps, whilst those with no talents in these directions can doubtless produce diagram maps (often more instructive than elaborate, and accurate maps) or help by providing the background information needed.

A startling list of maps of possible value in local studies is given at the end of Chapter VIII of Fagg and Hutchings' 'Introduction to Regional Surveying'; but even that list is not exhaustive and useful ideas may be derived from many of the post-war Planning Surveys—see General Bibliography.

#### FIELD-WORK AND CLASS VISITS

Local studies also make practicable what is in reality another form of visual aids—namely local field-work and the less elaborate class visits. There are always difficulties in arranging group field-work, but the snags are smaller and the advantages greater when it is the local area which is being studied. Most of the field-work will be outside normal class time and much of it can be done by individuals if required, though work by teams or the whole group will often provide better results. It would be pointless to reiterate here the different topics which might be studied, but the following list of class visits made by a group in a medium-sized seaside town may be suggestive—a pottery, tileworks, timber-yard, power station and harbour office within the town itself; and a cheese-factory, water-works, stone-quarries, clay-pits, Forestry Commission nurseries, various farms, water-cress beds, coastal walks and a boat trip in the general locality. Only lack of time prevented this list being two or three times as long, and the same group spent residential field-work week-ends in small towns at the two extremes of the area under review—(a whole county). In the opinion of the students, these week-ends were of the utmost value and they are probably especially desirable when a large area has been chosen for study. In addition a few of the group were able to attend with profit a residential week's local studies course under their tutor at a centre with similar geology and physical features in a neighbouring county—and this clearly helped greatly in their appreciation of their home area.

It should not need saying that care should be taken not to waste the journeys involved in any class visits, for to travel observantly can be as valuable as to study on arrival. If the class is large enough to warrant a coach the problem is easily solved, otherwise parties travelling in separate cars will probably need a cyclostyled itinerary.

Those requiring suggestions for field-work are advised to consult some of the books on the technique of local studies listed in the General Bibliography, particularly the Geographical Association booklet and Fagg and Hutchings. A special commendation may perhaps be given to the 'Transect' type of

survey,<sup>1</sup> where a note or sketch is made of all the physical and economic features of the country along any given line across the area. It has the asset of infinite variability, in accordance with the nature of the terrain and of the group: there are tasks for those with and those without artistic ability—but none of these tasks can be performed adequately without an understanding of the country traversed. A few well-drawn transect diagrams may represent a much sounder educational achievement than many a long-winded essay consisting mainly of extracts from standard works. It cannot be over-emphasised that local studies do give opportunities for genuine contributions to the store of local knowledge, provided that the tutor is prepared to break with the tradition that the 'set essay' is the best way of obtaining class participation. There is here the old danger of confusing means with ends. The essay was surely designed only as a means of obtaining fuller comprehension of the subject and of promoting self-expression by the students. If a student can attain these ends by other means we should do our best to encourage him.

#### OUTSIDE EXPERTS

Despite possible administrative problems, there is much to be said for inviting experts on various topics to speak to the group from time to time. This is particularly helpful when the group has chosen a general local studies course, for no teacher can then hope to be a specialist on the whole field. By careful planning of his visitors he can fill in the gaps in his knowledge and can also stimulate interests which may lead to more detailed courses in the future.

Finally, lest any tutor, student or administrator should imagine that this stress on visual aids, class visits, guest-speakers, etc., will mean that no serious work is done, that the group will be entertained rather than educated, may we both state definitely from our experience that more work is done (admittedly with more enjoyment) by both students and tutor when these various 'accessories to straight lecturing' are used. We make these proposals purely on educational grounds and not as offering any easy alternative to normal classes.

P. G. H. H.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, p. 45 of *The Village Surveyed* (Cecil Stewart).

## SECTION IX

### THE SYLLABUS

#### FORMS OF SYLLABUS

AT various points we have stressed one of the main difficulties in planning and carrying through a course on local studies,—that of creating a satisfactory synthesis of widely different subjects. Local studies involve so many aspects of specialist knowledge, that there are few tutors capable of dealing adequately with every aspect in a comprehensive course. Some years ago an attempt was made in this area to develop a panel of part-time and full-time tutors, who by collaboration might deal with the subject in a series of linked courses extending over a number of years, covering geology, settlement, social history, agriculture and industry, architecture and crafts, local government and social organisation. In two centres this has worked with some success, but has been found to involve problems of co-ordination which have not yet been satisfactorily solved. On the whole it has proved better for one tutor to deal with the whole field in general terms in a three-year or longer period, after which the groups can decide to pursue some particular aspect more intensively with a specialist tutor; but even where one tutor is qualified to deal with a wide range of local studies, such courses are bound to be given a slant in one direction or another by the general training and bias of the lecturer.

There do appear, however, to be two possible methods when an over-all synthesis is attempted by one tutor. The one is primarily historical and chronological, in which the present is finally described and discussed as part of a continuous process; the other is mainly descriptive, the chronological order being ignored, so that more attention can be paid to the contemporary scene. The two following suggested schemes may help students and tutors towards clearer decisions as to what they want. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and to a certain extent both techniques can be combined in the same course in dealing with particular aspects; we are deliberately giving extreme forms.

Syllabus A is an example of the historical approach. As has already been said, local studies include 'local history', but a typical 'local history' course very often only touches the fringe of local studies. It may totally exclude the geographical setting, geology, natural history, archaeology and it quite often ends abruptly about the year 1900, omitting the whole of the contemporary

scene, twentieth-century problems and current trends. Very often it concentrates on social and political history and largely ignores the economic background. In short, as commonly treated, it occupies the position of one specialist discipline within the general field covered by local studies. It is, however, possible to widen the scope of a local history course to provide a general background to local studies. Such a background course can then be followed by specialist courses on particular aspects. Preferably it should be planned as a three-year tutorial and the following scheme therefore assumes an extended three-year treatment.

## SYLLABUS A

### YEAR 1

- (a) *General survey of the area.* The geological and geographical character, contours and communications, etc., and their relationship to settlement, industry and agriculture.
- (b) *The early history of the region.* The mixing of peoples, types of settlement and movements in the periods up to the Norman Conquest.
- (c) *The pattern of life within the area*, at different periods up to the Conquest.
  - (i) Pre-Roman; (ii) Roman; (iii) Saxon.
- (d) *The pattern of life in the area* in the early Middle Ages.

'Pattern' is used throughout to indicate a descriptive synthesis in which social and economic organisation, character and distribution of population, buildings and art, beliefs and way of life are included. In a general introductory course a clearer picture of earlier stages can be given in this way than by any attempt to trace the exact historical sequence of change; in any case adequate local material for such treatment before the Norman Conquest rarely exists.

### YEAR 2

*From the thirteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century.*

In the second year, the approach needs to be a more exact tracing of the historical process. But it is suggested that a general survey of life and conditions in the area at certain specific periods should also be attempted. The periods chosen for such surveys would depend on the character of the area. The following are suggested as suitable for such reviews in most cases.

- (a) *The mid-thirteenth century*, when medieval civilisation reached its fullest development—economic, social, artistic and religious.

- (b) *The period following the Black Death.* A period of cultural decline and economic transformation.
- (c) *The late Tudor period,* when the economic and religious changes of the earlier Tudor period have settled into a period of relative stability.
- (d) *The mid-eighteenth century,* before the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution begin seriously to affect the particular area.

In some areas might be added:

- (e) *The period of the Napoleonic wars.*

It is suggested that more time should be devoted to these attempts at period-synthesis (at least three or four lectures to each) than to the connecting historical analysis.

### YEAR 3

*The last 150 years.* The same method is recommended as for Year 2, and the following three periods are suggested:

- (a) *The era following the Napoleonic wars*—a time of economic instability and depression, but also a period in which the general pattern has in most areas already been modified greatly by the impact of the Industrial Revolution.
- (b) *The close of the nineteenth century (or the first decade of the twentieth century).* The end of an era of relative stability. In some agricultural areas 1860 to 1870 might also be taken, being the peak period of agricultural development and rural employment, preceding the general decline from the 'seventies' onwards.
- (c) *The pattern today,* including an examination of present trends. This last section with its historical introduction would normally occupy well over half the session. It would involve the consideration of current development plans, reports such as those of the Local Government Boundary Commission, the Dower Committee on National Parks and Conservation areas, etc.

It should be clear that even a three-year course can be regarded only as a general introduction. With a keen group it could be followed by a series of more specialist courses, the subjects depending on the interest of the group and the character of the area. In a region rich in monastic associations, a more detailed study of medieval monasticism might logically follow; in another, eighteenth-century enclosures and land improvements; in another, developments in industry and agriculture; in another local domestic architecture, and so on; or it might lead to a

consideration of current issues, such as town and country planning, the study of local government, or the use of leisure. Other groups might decide to turn back to geology, archaeology, or natural history.

## SYLLABUS B

### AN EXAMPLE OF THE 'CONTEMPORARY APPROACH'

(Brackets indicate items not always applicable)

#### YEAR 1—The Land and the People

(a) *The land.* The local environment: brief survey of the geological history of the area, tracing the formation of the chief rock-types; the subsequent surface arrangement of these rocks; the evolution of the hills and valleys (the headlands and bays). Local examples—but related to the region around.

(If coastal area: examination in detail of the coastline, as providing the best illustrations.)

Local rivers and their valleys. The question of water supply. Climate and its effects on water supply, vegetation and land use. The natural vegetation (marsh, grass and woods); animal, bird and insect life (if the tutor or some student is capable of a simple account).

Analysis of the effects of the chief rock-types upon scenery and soil. Detailed study of one or two areas, preferably contrasted.

(b) *The people.* Historical survey of the past and present settlement—where and why. Rate of population-growth compared with United Kingdom (and maybe with neighbouring regions).

Factors affecting present density and distribution of population: reasons for the siting of main town(s) and/or villages.

Analysis of 1951 Census figures *re* age-composition, comparative birth and death rates, etc.; and of changes since 1931. National population problems and policy, and their local implications.

Population forecasts of the local development plan: special local problems (e.g. rural depopulation, overcrowding, etc.).

#### YEAR 2—The Work of the People

(Sections (a) and (b) could well be reversed in an urban area)

(a) *The people on the land. Local farming.* Influence of soils, climate, slope and economic factors on local farming: in the past—wartime changes—post-war trends. Special comparisons of local farming in the 1930s and 1950s, to assess the impact of the war and of Government planning.

The national problems and policy regarding farming—and their local implications.

More detailed study of special aspects (e.g. sheep, mechanisation, poultry farming, farm boundaries, labour supply, etc.).

(b) *The people and industry.* Present occupational structure of the area, distinguishing between the productive and the service industries.

Factors in industrial location in the past and today. Past use of water-power: effects of Industrial Revolution, and of electricity and road transport.

Communications by rail, road and water. (Canals, ports, air routes.)

The extractive industries, the manufacturing industries and the service industries in detail. (Village crafts, market-town industries, the tourist trade, seasonal labour, etc.)

Past and present unemployment figures, and prospects for the future.

### YEAR 3—Living Together

(a) *Administration.* History of the local area in the national administrative machine (pre-Reform elections; effects of reforms and boundary commissions; further possible changes).

Local government changes—from manor and hundred to parish and J.P.s; and from Turnpike Trusts and Poor Law Unions to District and County Councils.

‘Planning’—earlier attempts: the wartime reports of Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt; and the post-war acts, especially the 1947 Act. The local development plan in outline.

(b) *Social aspects.* The public utilities and supply services: electricity, sewerage, piped water, gas, etc. Present position and future plans. The social services: past, present and future of housing, education, health, public assistance, etc. The cultural and recreational facilities.

Hopes and fears for the future.

J. R. A.  
P. G. H. H.

## SECTION X

### SOURCES AND GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

We have recommended at the end of some sections a few books of particular value concerning the topics dealt with in the section; but any attempt at an adequate general bibliography is clearly impracticable in a booklet of this length, because of the diffuse nature of the subject. We can do no more than draw attention to some useful sources of information and material and to a few recommended volumes.

Those who need further aid are referred to:

- (i) *English Local History Handlist*. Historical Association. Geo. Philip, 1952. (Second edition.) 2s. 6d.
- (ii) The booklists in *Local Studies*. Geographical Association. 1949. 3s., and in *The Schools Look Around*. E. Layton and J. Blanco White. Both these lists are mainly geographical.
- (iii) *A Handbook of Local History: Dorset*. Robert Douch. University of Bristol. 1952. 3s.  
(This booklet, though dealing with a particular area, will be found extremely useful as a guide to general works and sources of information.)

#### I. LOCAL SOURCES USUALLY AVAILABLE:

'VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY': the best systematic general survey of local historical material—though, unfortunately, still incomplete for many counties.

PUBLICATIONS OF LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES: many have annual publications over the last century, often with supplementary volumes on detailed topics.

RECORD SOCIETIES: exist in many counties and boroughs for publications of manuscripts varying from Manorial Court Rolls or Subsidy Returns to Parish Registers.

COUNTY MAGAZINES: of varied quality, but often useful. Rarely properly indexed, but worth combing.

LOCAL PRESS: often of the utmost value, especially for the period of the last hundred years, on which little has been written.

**COUNTY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM(s)**: will usually help adult groups with any genuine research, despite the normal rules about the rarer books being for reference only. Photostat copies of rare documents can ordinarily be obtained fairly cheaply.

**COUNTY RECORD OFFICES**: a recent and most valuable development. Are becoming the repository for all important local manuscripts or photostat copies. Some (e.g. Essex) publish useful selections from their records. *Local Records*, ed. Redstone and Steer (Bell), contains an excellent summary of the type of records usually available in County Record Offices.

**COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT PLAN**: often a source of much help in contemporary matters. May sometimes welcome the help of the group in certain pieces of research.

**COUNTY AGRICULTURAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES, FARM INSTITUTES, ETC**: Invaluable on all contemporary farming problems. Information can also usually be obtained from the county branch of the National Farmers' Union.

**PARISH AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS** should now be obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Collection of Statistics Branch), Government Building, Lytham St. Anne's, Lancs, for the payment of a small fee.

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES** (including Port and Harbour Authorities, River Catchment Boards, etc.).

## II. NATIONAL BODIES:

The following national bodies may also be of considerable assistance:

**THE GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION**: c/o The Park Branch Library, Duke Street, Sheffield, 2.

**THE LE PLAY SOCIETY**: The Birlings, Birling Gap, Nr. Eastbourne.

**THE COUNCIL FOR PROMOTION OF FIELD STUDIES**: Juniper Hall, Mickleham, Surrey.

**BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**: c/o Museum of English Rural Life, 7 Shinfield Road, Reading.

## III. GENERAL WORKS OF REFERENCE

Ordnance Survey Maps (1") particularly the edition issued in the 1810s as a tithe index. The 2½" and 6" are the most useful for general purposes and the 25" (published first between 1872 and 1875 for most areas with four main subsequent revisions) essential for detailed village or urban surveys.

The 1" geological survey maps where available.

Geological Memoirs for 1" Geology Maps.  
County Wells and Springs Memoirs.  
Various District and Economic Memoirs, published by H.M.S.O.  
H.M.S.O. issues a catalogue of all Geology Maps, Memoirs, etc.; and another useful catalogue of Classified Geological Photos (from which prints or lantern slides may be obtained).  
K. Ekwall, *Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* and the County Volumes of the English Place-Names Society.  
Registrar-General's Census Reports.  
Kelly's County Directories.  
Any early County Directories.  
*Itineraries*: Camden, Leland, Defoe, Celia Fiennes, Arthur Young, Cobbett, Priestley (*English Journey*).  
For providing a general background the following can be recommended:  
J. and C. Hawkes, *Prehistoric Britain* and the seven volumes in the Pelican History of England Series (Penguin Books).  
Stamp and Beaver, *The British Isles* (Longmans).  
Wilfrid Smith, *Economic Geography of the British Isles* (Methuen).  
A. C. Ogilvie (Editor), *Great Britain: Essays in Regional Geography*.  
H. C. Darby (Editor), *Historical Geography of England Before 1800* (Cambridge University Press).  
J. B. Mitchell, *Historical Geography* (English University Press, 1954).  
M. and C. H. B. Quennell, *History of Everyday Things in England* (Batsford).  
G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (Longmans).  
C. M. Waters, *Economic History of England* (Oxford University Press).  
The following series cover different aspects and various regions and provide much useful material:  
*The New Naturalist Series* (Collins).  
*The County Archaeologies* (Methuen).  
*Survey of England by Counties* (Collins).  
British Association Regional Surveys, e.g. *Oxford Region* (Oxford University Press, 1955).  
Note: Reference should also be made to the lists at the end of the various sections.

#### IV. WORKS ON THE TECHNIQUE OF LOCAL STUDIES

Geographical Association: *Local Studies* (1949), with many useful examples and a good booklist.  
Fagg and Hutchings: *Introduction to Regional Surveying* (Cambridge University Press, 1930).

Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 10: *Local Studies* (1948). Especially good on questions of visual material.

H. M. Barron: *Your Parish History: How to Discover and Write It* (1930).

W. R. Tate: *The Parish Chest* (Cambridge University Press, 1946).

Evans, Searson and Williams: *Local Studies for Schools* (George Philip, 1949). Contains useful lists of leading questions.

C. A. Simpson: *Making Local Surveys* (Pitman).

C. A. Simpson: *The Study of Local Geography* (Methuen).

Layton and Blanco White: *The School Looks Around* (Longmans).

Historical Association Pamphlet No. 66: *Parish History and Records*.

R. B. Pugh: *How to Write a Parish History*.

Morris and Jordan: *Introduction to the Study of Local History and Antiquities* (1910).

J. Wake: *How to Compile a History and Present-Day Record of Village Life*. (1935). A simple but useful introduction for the Northamptonshire Women's Institutes.

## V. SOME STIMULATING EXAMPLES OF LOCAL STUDIES WORK

(i) PLANNING SURVEYS, ETC. Of the many published since the war, the following may be found especially helpful:

Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Oxford: *Country Planning* (Oxford University Press).

West Midland Group: *English County: Planning Survey of Herefordshire* (1946).

Worcester's Civic Survey: *County Town*.

*Conurbation: Planning Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country*.

University College of the South-West: *Devon and Cornwall: Preliminary Survey* (1947).

Thomas Sharp: *Cathedral City: Durham* (Architectural Press).

Thomas Sharp: *Exeter Phoenix* (Architectural Press).

*Suffolk Planning Survey* (1946).

*English City: The Story of Bristol* (University of London Press, 1945).

### (ii) OTHER LOCAL STUDIES:

D. M. Goodfellow: *Tyneside: The Social Facts*.

*Wickham Bishops: Survey of an Essex Village*. A very good little booklet published by the Wickham Bishops WEA group.

*Knebworth*. A local history booklet published by Knebworth WEA Branch 1953.

Cecil Stewart: *The Village Surveyed* (Sutton-at-Hone).

*Binham—A Social Survey*. Published by the Eastern District of the WEA. *Bishop's Stortford* (Le Play House Press, 1948). Revised edition: an excellent example of a logical pattern which nevertheless avoids rigidity. *Keith Jeremiah: A Full Life in the Country*. Dealing with the Sudbury area in Suffolk (Batsford).

Brentnall and Carter: *The Marlborough Country*.

The Cambridge University Press County Geographies of the Edwardian days are also full of interest.

## VI. VISUAL AIDS MATERIAL

Probably the most comprehensive index of visual aids material is to be found in the 'Visual Aids: Films and Film-Strips, parts i–iv', issued by the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids (33 Queen Anne Street, London, W.1).

CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY (Central Office of Information, Government Buildings, Bromyard Avenue, London, W.3): publishes catalogues of all its films regularly. Particularly useful may be:

- (i) The *Pattern of Britain* series. Central Film Library Nos. UK 534 (Leicestershire); UK 550 (Sutherlandshire); UK 579 (Cornwall); UK 732 (Fenlands); UK 773 (NE. Scotland); UK 794 (Wiltshire Downlands).
- (ii) The *Farming Seasons* series:

UK 384 (Central Dorset); UK 385 (Ross-on-Wye); UK 386 (S. Lancs and Cheshire); UK 387 (Norfolk).

But various other films may also be of great general and some local interest, such as:

UK 760: *Beginning of History* (Pre-Roman Britain).

UK 1360: *Forest Heritage* (New Forest).

UK 1189: *Local Government* (Norwich).

Some of the *Britain Can Make It* or the *This is Britain* series; and certainly all rural local studies groups should see UK 766: *Twenty-four Square Miles*—the film made to illustrate the Oxford Agricultural Research Institute's book on rural Oxford.

NATIONAL SAVINGS COMMITTEE: series of useful short films on different counties.

FILM-STRIPS: there are many companies making strips which are now normally available on a 'sale-or-return' basis. In addition strips can be hired from various firms or from the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids at quite low rents. Visual Information Service issue a

large number of strips, of very varied quality; but the series of Common Ground on Regions of Great Britain is almost uniformly very good—(catalogue obtainable from E.S.A. Ltd., 181 High Holborn, London, W.C.1). *Picture Post* have also issued a number of useful geographical strips.

COLLECTIONS OF PICTURES, of which prints may usually be bought, have been made by:

Aerofilm Ltd., Bush House, Aldwych, London, W.C.2.

Aero Pictorial Ltd., 137 Regent Street, London, W.1.

Air Survey Co. Ltd., 24 Bruton Street, London, W.1.

National Buildings Records, 31 Chester Terrace, London, N.W.1.

Geological Museum, South Kensington, S.W.7.

## VII. BACKGROUND READING

In addition to the more academic sources, every area will have its background literature of novels and essays, which should certainly be obtained for the class book box.

The recent spate of County Guides, regional books and topographical studies also provide much useful and entertaining reading.

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